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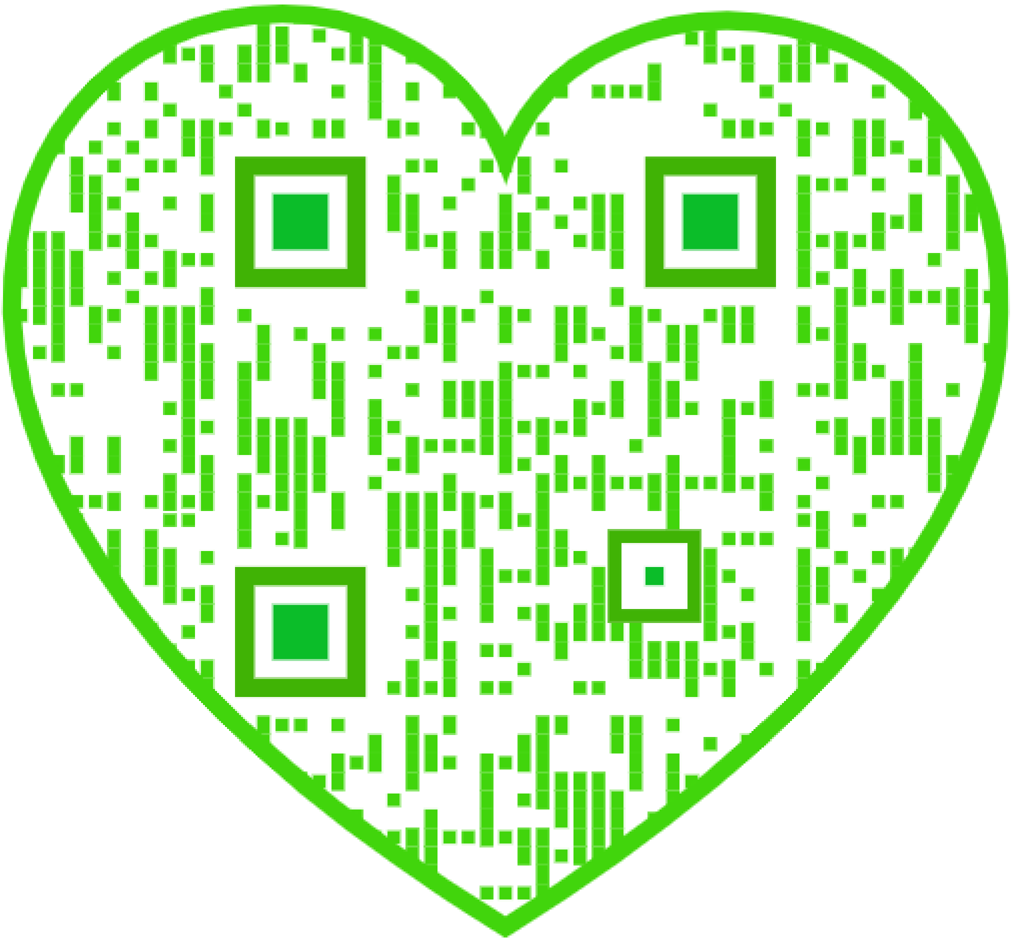
New Siri

THE FUTURE OF PERSONAL ASSISTANCE BEYOND SCREENS



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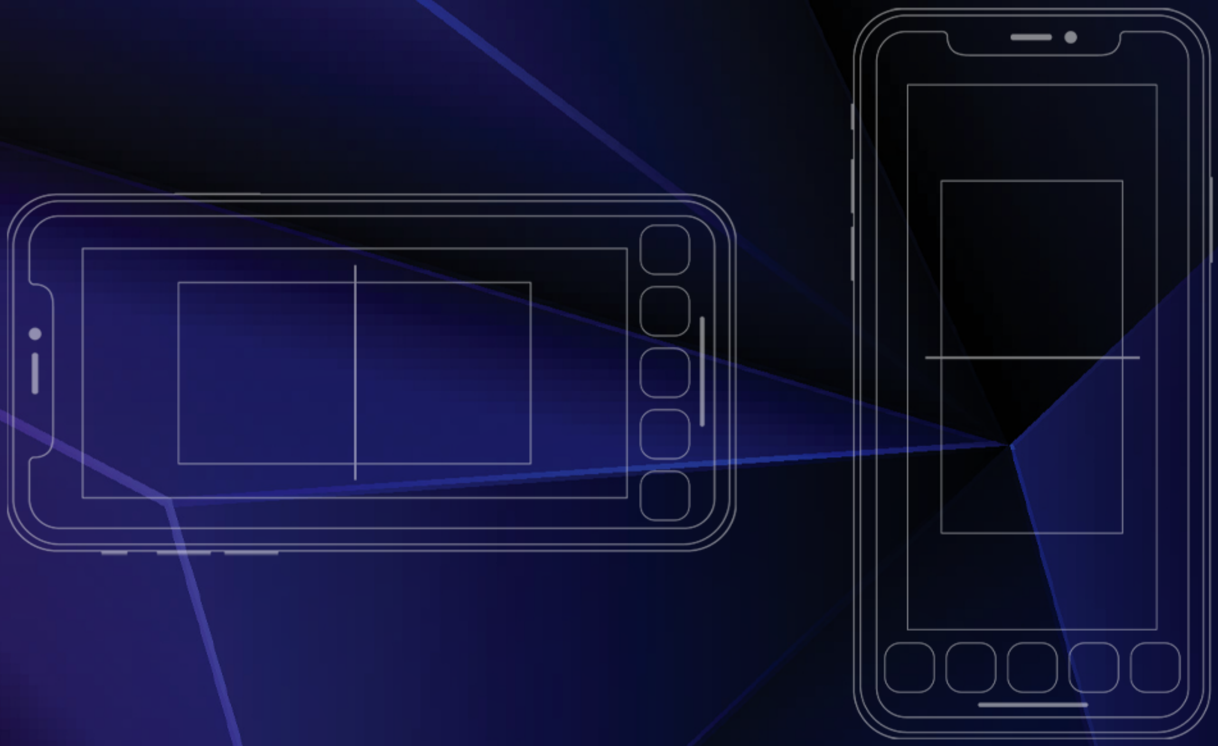

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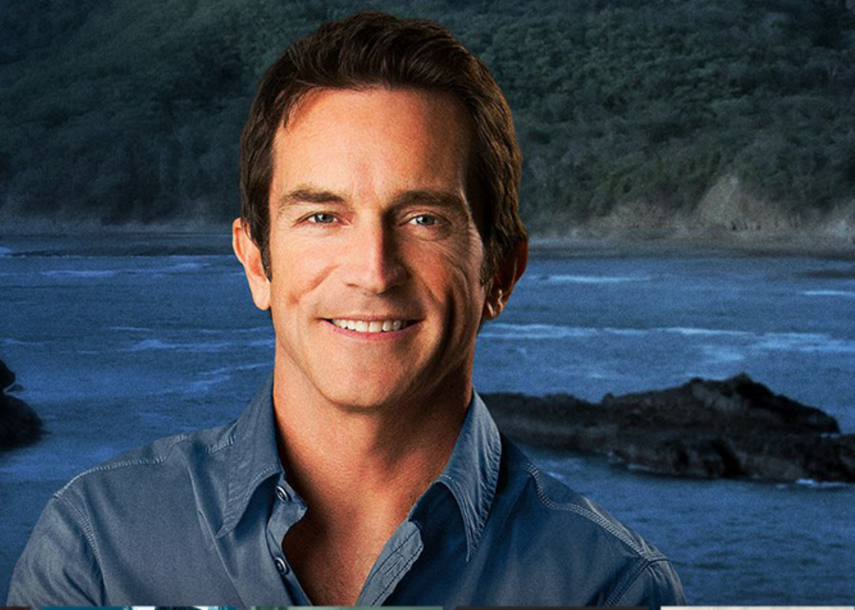

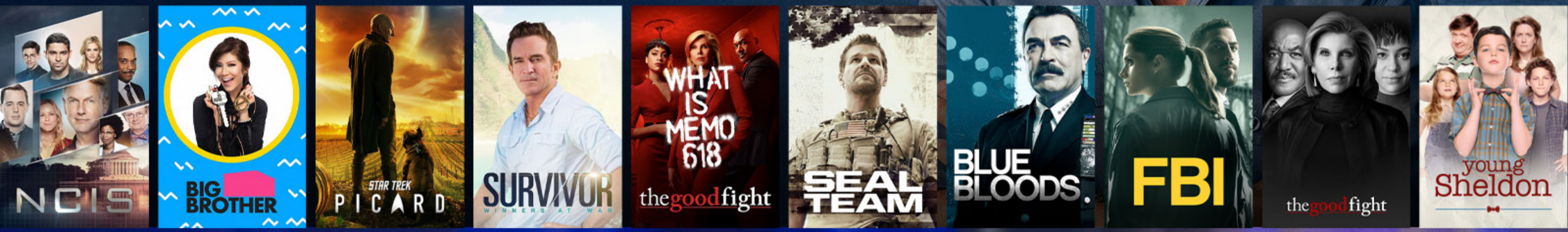
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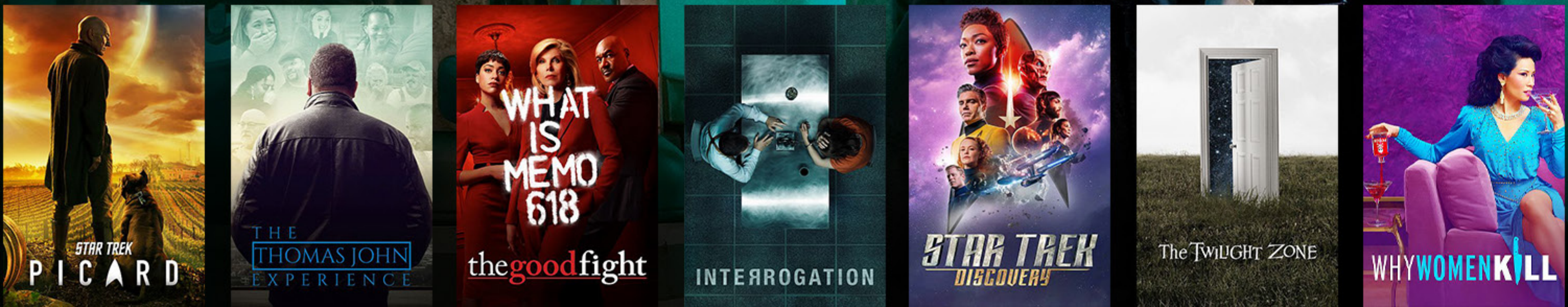
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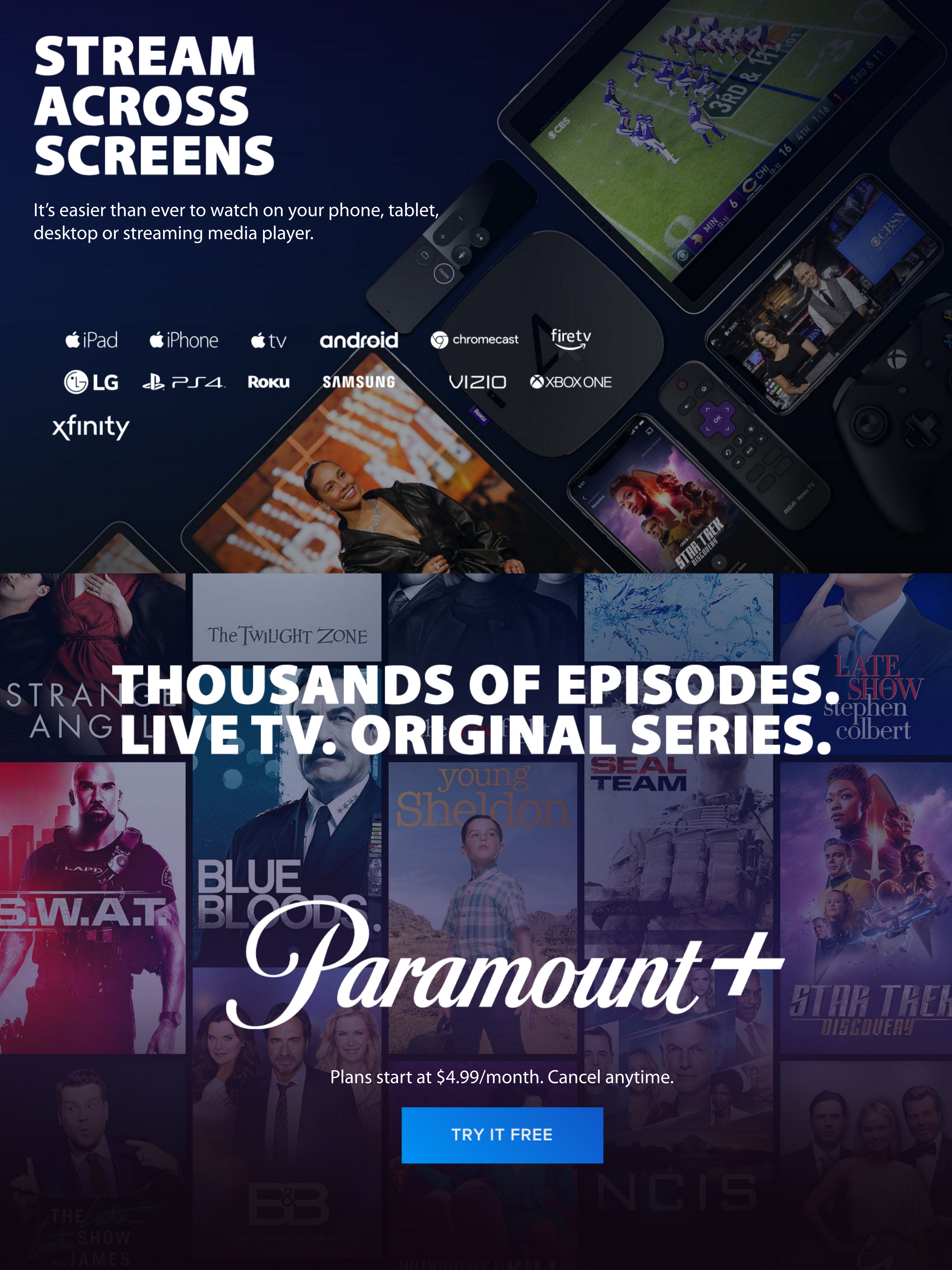

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WWDC 2025 DATE SET AS TECH WORLD AWAITS IOS 19, MACOS 16, WATCHOS 12 AND MORE

WWDC25

In a sleek Cupertino boardroom, engineers and execs finalize a schedule that's got the tech sphere humming with anticipation.

This week, Apple locked in the dates for its Worldwide Developers Conference 2025, pegging the event for June 9 through June 13, with a keynote kicking things off on the first day.

For developers, analysts, and gadget fans, it's a marquee moment—a glimpse into the next wave of systems set to power iPhones, Macs, Apple Watches, and beyond, all unveiled under the California sun.

This isn't a casual gathering. WWDC 2025 promises a showcase of Apple's latest software strides, spotlighting iOS 19, macOS 16, watchOS 12, iPadOS 19, tvOS 19, and visionOS 3.

It's a lineup that could reshape how millions interact with their gear, from sharper AI tools to slicker interfaces. Susan Prescott, Apple's VP of Worldwide Developer Relations, hailed it as a chance to "empower developers with cutting-edge tools," a signal that the firm's betting big on innovation to keep its ecosystem humming.

The tale starts at Apple Park, where the keynote will beam out online, free for all to catch via streams on the company's site and YouTube. A select crowd—developers and students—will snag spots at the in-person opener, a nod to WWDC's hybrid roots since 2020.

A stage set for unveiling system updates that'll roll out to over 1.46 billion active devices later this year, a tech ritual that's held steady every June for nearly two decades.

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Apple Intelligence

Apple Intelligence

SOFTWARE SPOTLIGHT STEALS THE SHOW

The headline act is iOS 19, a system poised to shake up the iPhone's look and feel. Word from industry insiders hints at a design overhaul, drawing cues from visionOS to unify Apple's platforms with a glassy, layered vibe.

It's not just eye candy—analysts expect smarter AI baked into Siri, tackling tasks with a conversational finesse that could rival chatbots like Gemini.

The iPhone's core system hasn't seen this big a facelift in years, and developers are already buzzing about what it'll mean for apps.

macOS 16 steps up next, likely mirroring iOS 19's visual shift.

Think icons and menus syncing across Apple's lineup, a move to streamline the Mac experience. It's a chance to polish Sequoia's edges, with whispers of tighter gear integration and AI-driven shortcuts.

WatchOS 12 rounds out the trio, set to juice up Apple Watches with fresh health trackers—maybe blood pressure or glucose perks—building on a fitness legacy that's kept wrists ticking since 2015.

IPADOS, TVOS, AND VISIONOS JOIN THE FRAY

iPadOS 19's on deck, shadowing iOS 19's redesign with tweaks for bigger screens. It's a system that's drifted from its phone roots since 2019, and this update could sharpen multitasking or Pencil tricks, keeping iPads a cut above.

tvOS 19, the Apple TV's backbone, might snag AI search boosts, though it's typically light on flash—expect a steady upgrade, not a overhaul.

VisionOS 3, powering the Vision Pro headset, aims to flex new apps and spatial computing chops, a year after its debut rocked the mixed-reality scene.

The rollout's a developer's dream—betas drop post-keynote, letting coders poke at iOS 19, macOS 16, and the rest.

Public betas follow in July, with full releases slated for fall, a rhythm Apple's honed over years.

It's a tech lifeline, feeding millions of gadgets with fresh features, from phones to headsets, all synced to a single beat.

AI TAKES CENTER STAGE

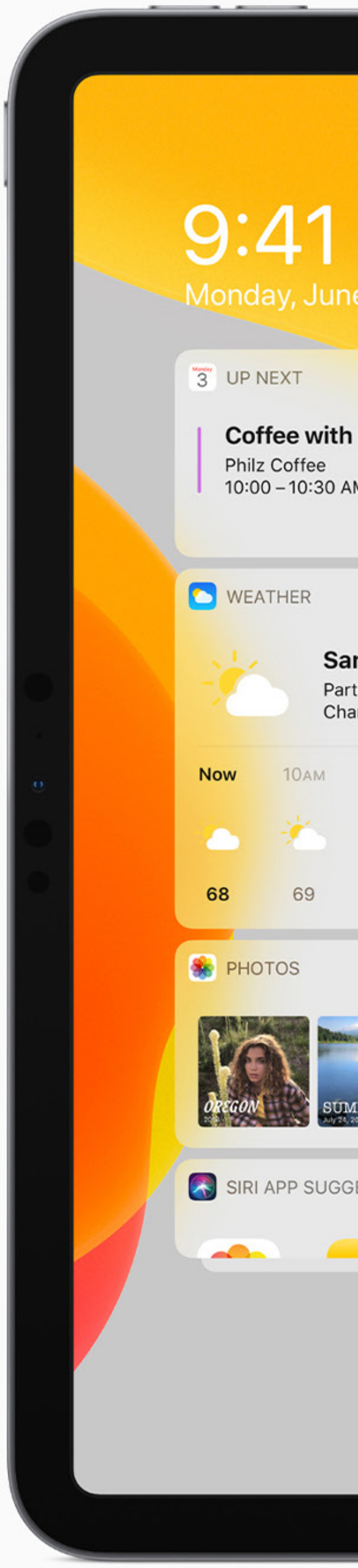
Apple Intelligence, the firm's AI suite, looms large. Launched last year, it's been a slow burn—Siri's big upgrades are still brewing, and WWDC 2025 could be the payoff.

Think voice tools that dig through photos or draft emails, a leap past last fall's text tweaks.

Klein's team has vowed to keep it sharp, and developers expect a flood of AI kits to juice up apps, from health trackers to chat widgets.

The stakes aren't small—400 million weekly ChatGPT users show the AI race is on, and Apple's playing catch-up.

Google's Gemini and OpenAI's GPT-4o set the pace, but WWDC could tilt the field. It's a story of tech giants jockeying for turf, with Apple betting its ecosystem can outsmart the pack.



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WW
DC
24
Media

GEAR WHISPERS STIR THE POT

WWDC's a software bash, but hardware's not off the table. Rumblings point to a Mac Pro refresh, maybe packing an M4 chip to flex AI muscle. The Vision Pro might snag new tricks too, a year after its splash. No big launches are guaranteed—Apple's spring rollouts like the iPhone 16e and M3 iPad Air stole some thunder—but a surprise drop wouldn't shock the crowd.

Production's steady—Cupertino's labs churn code, not steel, feeding a hybrid event that's free online and exclusive in-person.

Scale's vast—over 1.46 billion devices await these systems, a reach that's kept WWDC a tech tentpole.

It's a tale of software steering the ship, with gear as the wildcard.

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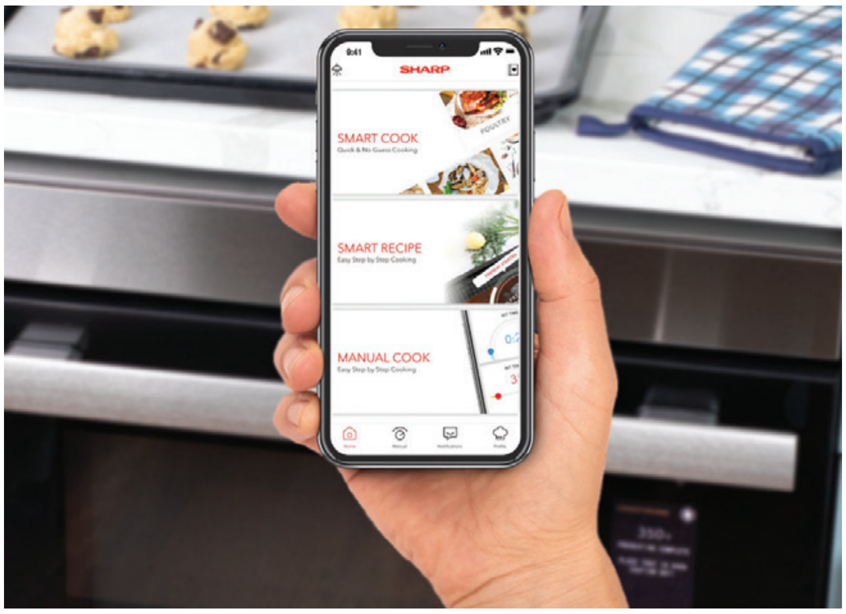

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OPENAI UNLEASHES AI IMAGE GENERATION INSIDE CHATGPT

In a bustling San Francisco lab, a team of engineers flips a switch, and a chatbot once known for spinning text begins painting pictures with the finesse of a digital artist. This week, OpenAI rolled out a bold upgrade, embedding its latest AI picture-making tool, GPT-4o, directly into ChatGPT, a move that turns casual chats into a canvas for crafting vivid visuals.

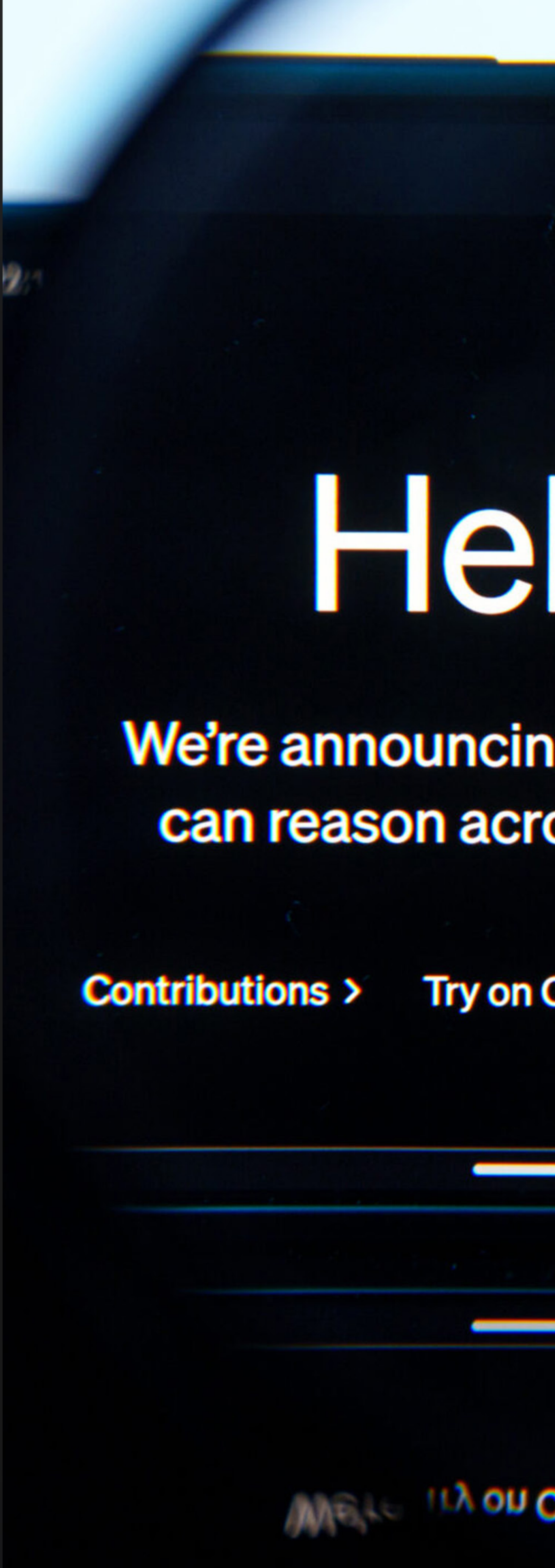
For tech enthusiasts and everyday users, it's a tale of a conversational sidekick stepping into the art studio, blending words and pixels in a seamless stroke.

This isn't a minor tweak. ChatGPT now churns out photorealistic visuals right in the app, letting users sketch ideas with a few typed prompts—no extra tools needed. From diagrams for a work pitch to a quirky postcard for a pal, the GPT-4o tool whips up detailed scenes faster than a barista pours a latte.

OpenAI's Sam Altman called it a "leap for creativity" during a live stream, a nod to a year of tinkering that's made this AI sharper at turning vague ideas into crisp reality.

The roots trace back to OpenAI's San Francisco hub, where the firm's been cooking up AI breakthroughs since 2015. ChatGPT, a hit for its text prowess, has long danced around visuals with the older DALL-E 3 system, but that setup felt clunky, a separate cog in the machine. Now, GPT-4o slots right into the chat flow, letting free and paid users alike spin pictures without breaking stride.

It's a story of tech smoothing its edges, handing users a brush to paint alongside their words.



May 13, 2024

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VISUALS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

GPT-4o doesn't mess around. Type a request—say, a dog in a top hat—and the tool crafts a scene with uncanny precision, nailing colors, shapes, and even legible text inside the frame. It's a step up from past efforts that garbled letters or fumbled details.

Users can tweak on the fly, asking for a red hat instead of blue or a transparent backdrop, all within the chat window. The result lands in under a minute, a quick sketch turned polished art.

The trick lies in GPT-4o's training, a year-long grind that's sharpened its knack for context. It pulls from chats to nail specifics—mention a sunset, and it won't churn out a noon glare.

Free users get a taste with limits on uploads, while Plus, Pro, and Team tiers dive deeper, editing uploaded shots or merging them into new creations. It's a yarn of tech bending to fit the user's whim, not the other way around.

BEYOND THE BASICS

This isn't just for doodles. Businesses can whip up infographics, logos, or social media snaps without hiring a designer.

A teacher might craft a diagram mid-lesson, a marketer a banner on the spot.

Sora, OpenAI's video platform, gets the same boost, adding a picture-making nook alongside its motion clips. Developers will soon tap it via API, weaving this visual flair into their own apps.

The tool's got guardrails—nudity and deepfakes are off-limits, with filters keeping the output clean. C2PA metadata tags every picture as

AI-made, a quiet nod to transparency without watermarks cluttering the view. It's a balance of freedom and fenceposts, letting creativity roam while dodging the wild edges.

A MARKET IN MOTION

OpenAI's not alone in this game. Google's Gemini has been flexing native picture-making chops, a rival spark that's lit a fire under ChatGPT's heels.

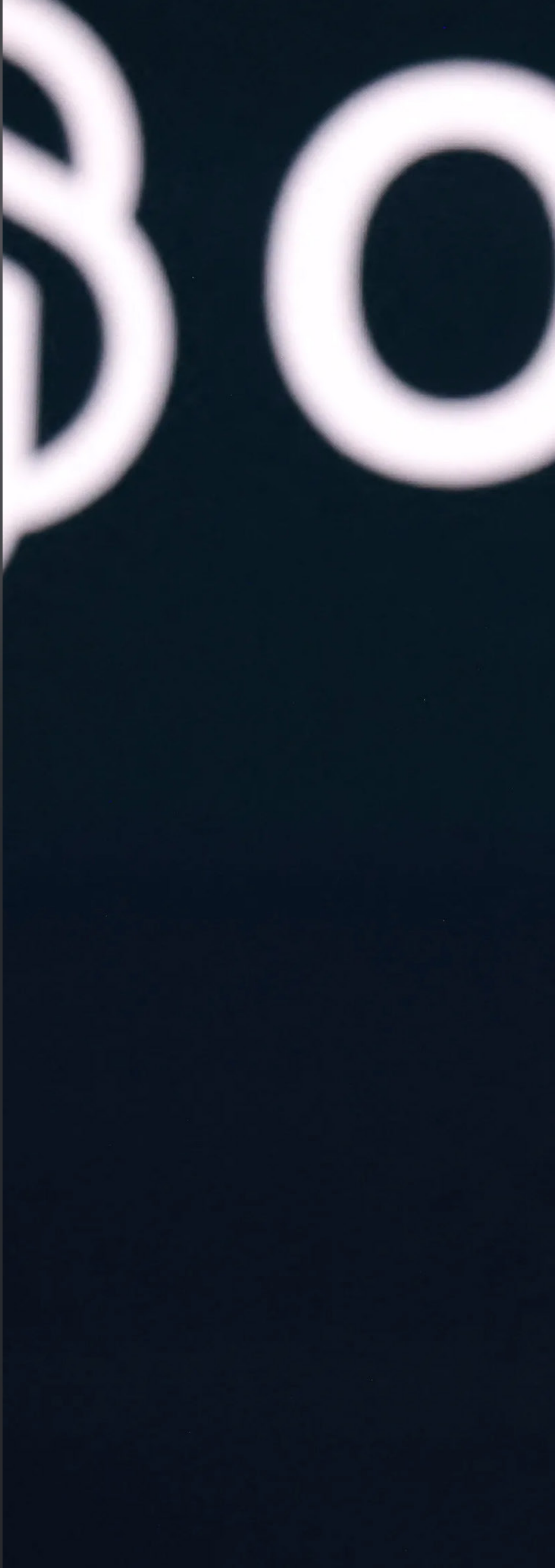
Smaller players like MidJourney and Recraft churn out slick visuals too, but GPT-4o's chat-first approach stands apart—type, tweak, done. It's riding a wave where AI's not just a backroom brain but a front-line helper, turning ideas into sights with a few keystrokes.

The firm's been on a tear—400 million weekly users lean on ChatGPT, a base hungry for more than text. This picture push taps that crowd, folding a new trick into a familiar tool. It's a tale of scale meeting smarts, a tech outfit betting on seamless to keep its edge.

CRAFTING THE FUTURE

The tech's a marvel—GPT-4o doesn't just draw; it listens, pulling from vast data troves to match prompts with precision. A request for "a cat on a rooftop at dusk" lands a feline perched under a purple sky, no gibberish text or wonky paws.

Free tiers get a taste, while Pro users at $200 a month dive into heavy lifting, editing shots or spinning custom hues with hex codes.



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MAC POWERS SEVERANCE SEASON TWO EDITING PROCESS

Behind the Mac: Editing Severance | Apple

MAC POWERS SEVERANCE SEASON TWO EDITING PROCESS

Software giant Apple has revealed how its Mac systems drove the editing process for the second season of the acclaimed thriller series "Severance," highlighting the precision behind the show's gripping finale.

The tech firm showcased the work of supervising editor Geoffrey Richman and director Ben Stiller, who relied on Mac hardware to shape the intense world of Lumon Industries, the fictional biotech at the heart of the Apple TV+ production.

For editors, developers, and viewers, it underscores Mac's pivotal role in crafting premium content with seamless efficiency.

This spotlight unveils a tight integration of technology and creativity. Richman, a three-time Emmy nominee, managed the editing of "Severance" season two, culminating in a finale that required intricate cuts across a massive 83 terabytes of footage.

Operating remotely, he harnessed a Mac mini with Avid software, paired with an iMac and MacBook Pro, to navigate the season's layered narrative. Stiller, an executive producer directing five episodes, collaborated closely, pushing structural boundaries to heighten the series' signature suspense.

"Severance" explores Lumon Industries, where employees undergo a procedure to split work and personal memories, a premise mirrored by the editing challenge of distilling key moments from vast data.

The Mac emerged as a critical tool, enabling Richman to handle 70 shots in a single finale scene, a marching band sequence synchronized across nine simultaneous perspectives. This capability reflects Apple's drive to cement its systems as essential for top-tier production workflows.

EDITING SUITE TAMES COMPLEXITY

Richman's toolkit centered on Apple's hardware lineup, blending power with flexibility to keep the editing process smooth. The Mac mini, stationed at a post-production facility, ran Avid Media Composer, managing the season's raw footage effortlessly.

An iMac anchored his primary editing station, while a MacBook Pro handled on-set adjustments, syncing cuts via iCloud for instant access. This setup proved vital for a finale demanding rapid, precise assembly.

The marching band scene highlights the technical edge. Richman synchronized 70 takes into a multicam clip, displaying nine perspectives in a 3x3 grid, allowing real-time selection of the sharpest shots without delay.

Stiller's direction shaped the sequence, refining cuts to amplify the episode's unsettling tone. This workflow transformed a flood of footage into a polished narrative, echoing Lumon's knack for order amid chaos.

macOS bolstered the effort, running Avid, Notes, Slack, Mail, Messages, Calendar, and Safari side by side with no slowdown.

Richman switched between apps using Mission Control shortcuts, maintaining pace across tasks. This multitasking strength kept

the editing tight, showcasing Apple's system design under real-world strain.

FINALE SHOTS PUSH BOUNDARIES

"Severance" season two deepens its debut's intrigue, plunging further into Lumon's eerie halls. The finale, a showcase of narrative twists, required a nimble editing approach to match its scope. Richman and Stiller tackled scenes like the birthing cabin sequence individually before weaving them into the episode, relying on Mac's capacity to juggle multiple cuts across devices without faltering.

The show's fictional video editing woes, seen in episode four's glitchy ORTBO welcome clip, stand in stark contrast to the real-world finesse. Richman highlighted the irony of Lumon's low-tech effort, suggesting characters like Milchick and Miss Huang pieced it together hastily.

In reality, Mac's performance ensured a flawless finish, cementing "Severance" as Apple TV+'s top-viewed series.

The footage volume—83 terabytes—tested limits, yet Mac's storage and speed held firm.

Playing nine shots simultaneously in real time streamlined the process, a practical edge for a series where every frame matters. This efficiency underscores Apple's hardware meeting the demands of intricate storytelling.

TECH DRIVES PREMIUM PRODUCTION

Apple's focus extends beyond "Severance," reinforcing Mac's foothold in high-end TV crafting. The iMac's processing power fueled Richman's remote edits, while the MacBook Pro's portability

kept him agile on set. Continuity features synced work across systems, trimming time from tight schedules. This integration echoes across Apple's creative toolkit, from film to audio.

The Mac mini's Avid compatibility managed the finale's heaviest tasks, syncing sprawling takes without strain. Richman favored the system's layout over PC alternatives, citing its workflow boost.

This blend of power and usability positions Mac as a preferred choice for editors tackling complex projects.

Stiller's hands-on approach amplified the tech's impact.

Directing five episodes, he tested cuts like the marching band's rhythm, made feasible by Mac's real-time playback.

This partnership turned raw footage into a thriller's heartbeat, proving Apple's gear can match a director's vision shot for shot.

INDUSTRY SHIFTS INTO FOCUS

"Severance" season two's success on Apple TV+ solidifies Mac's imprint in premium editing.

The show's top viewership reflects a polish Richman attributes to his setup, a system that handled 83 terabytes without a hiccup.

This milestone bolsters Apple's push into high-caliber content, pairing hardware with narrative clout.

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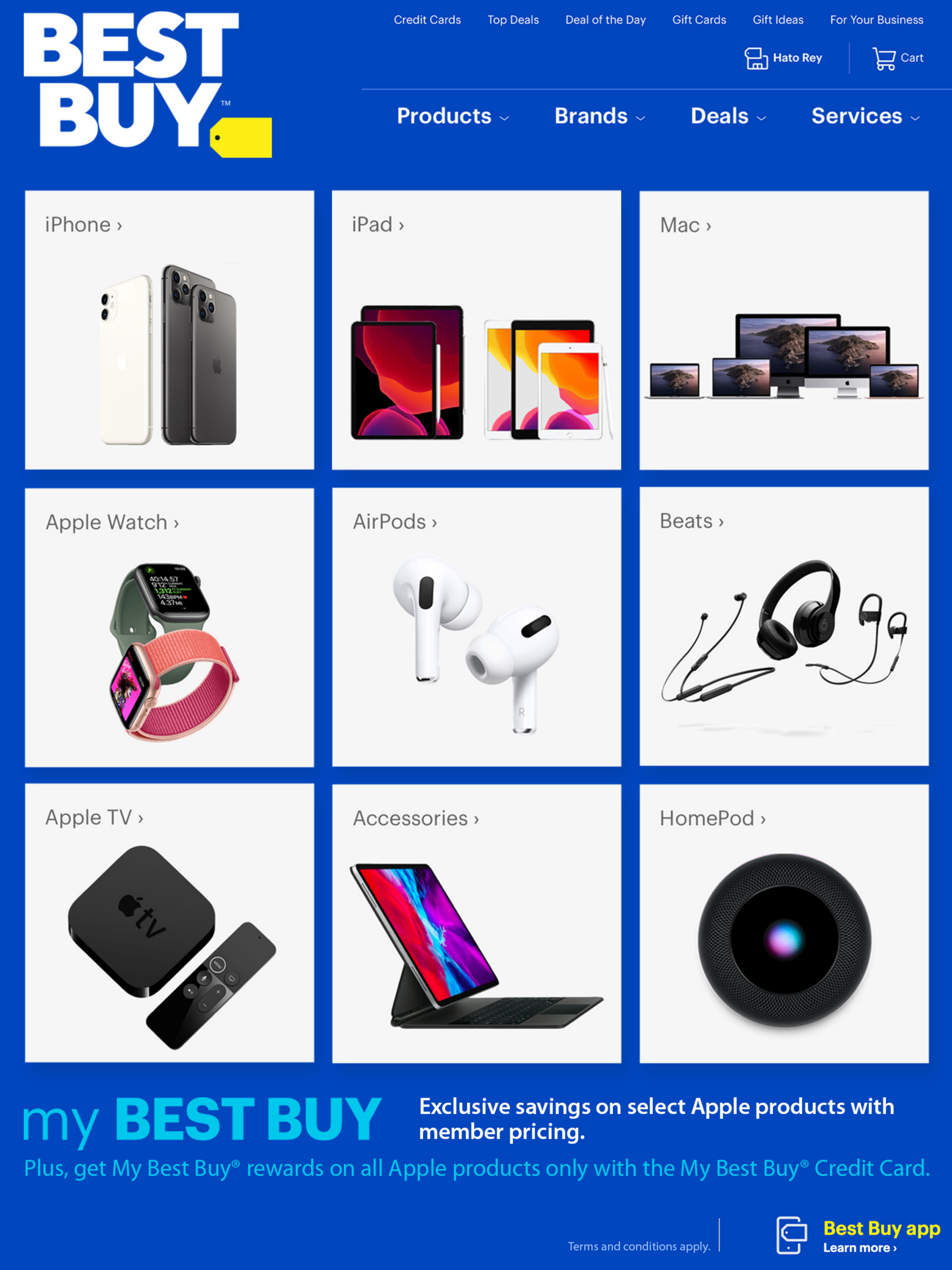

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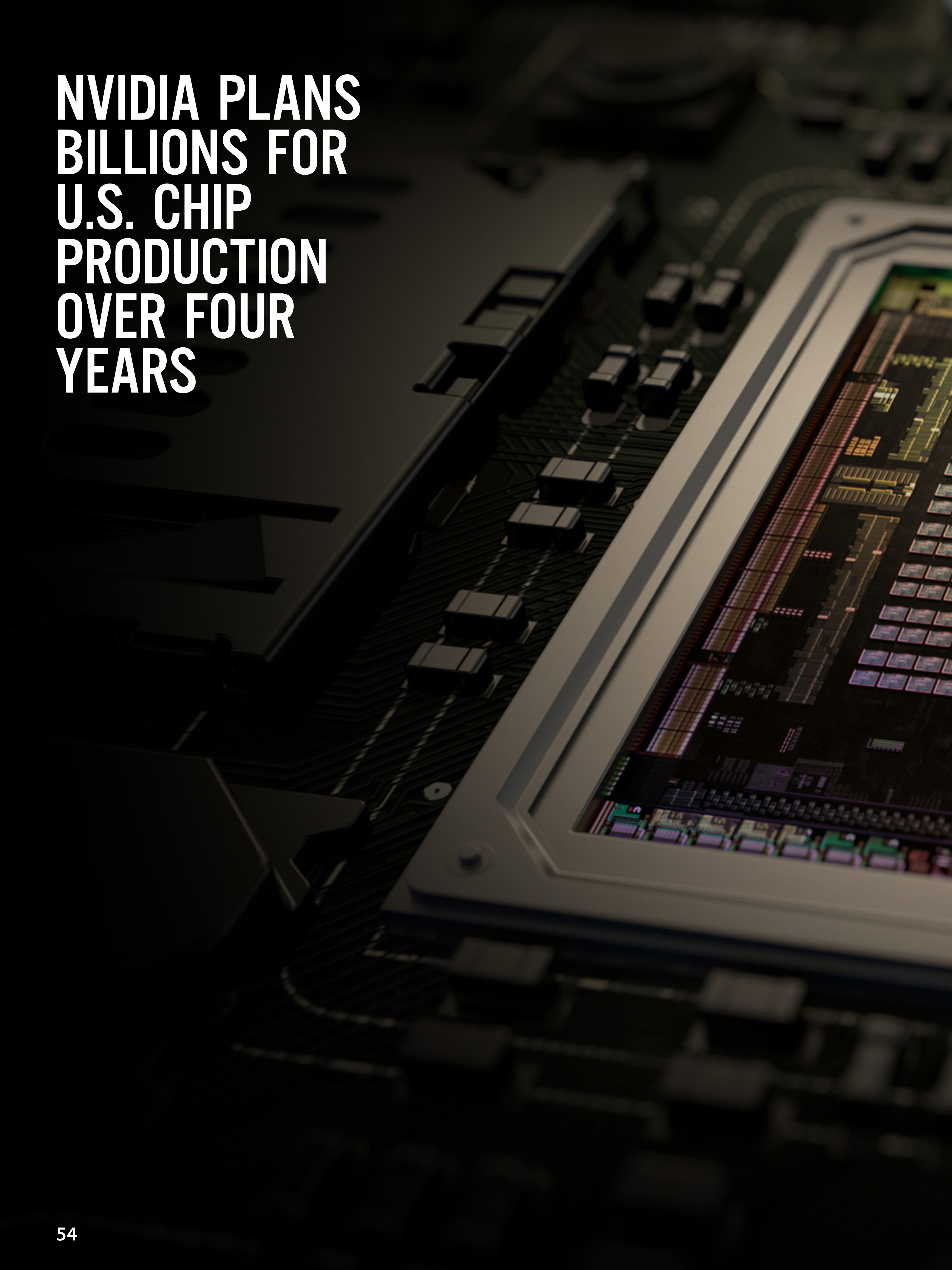

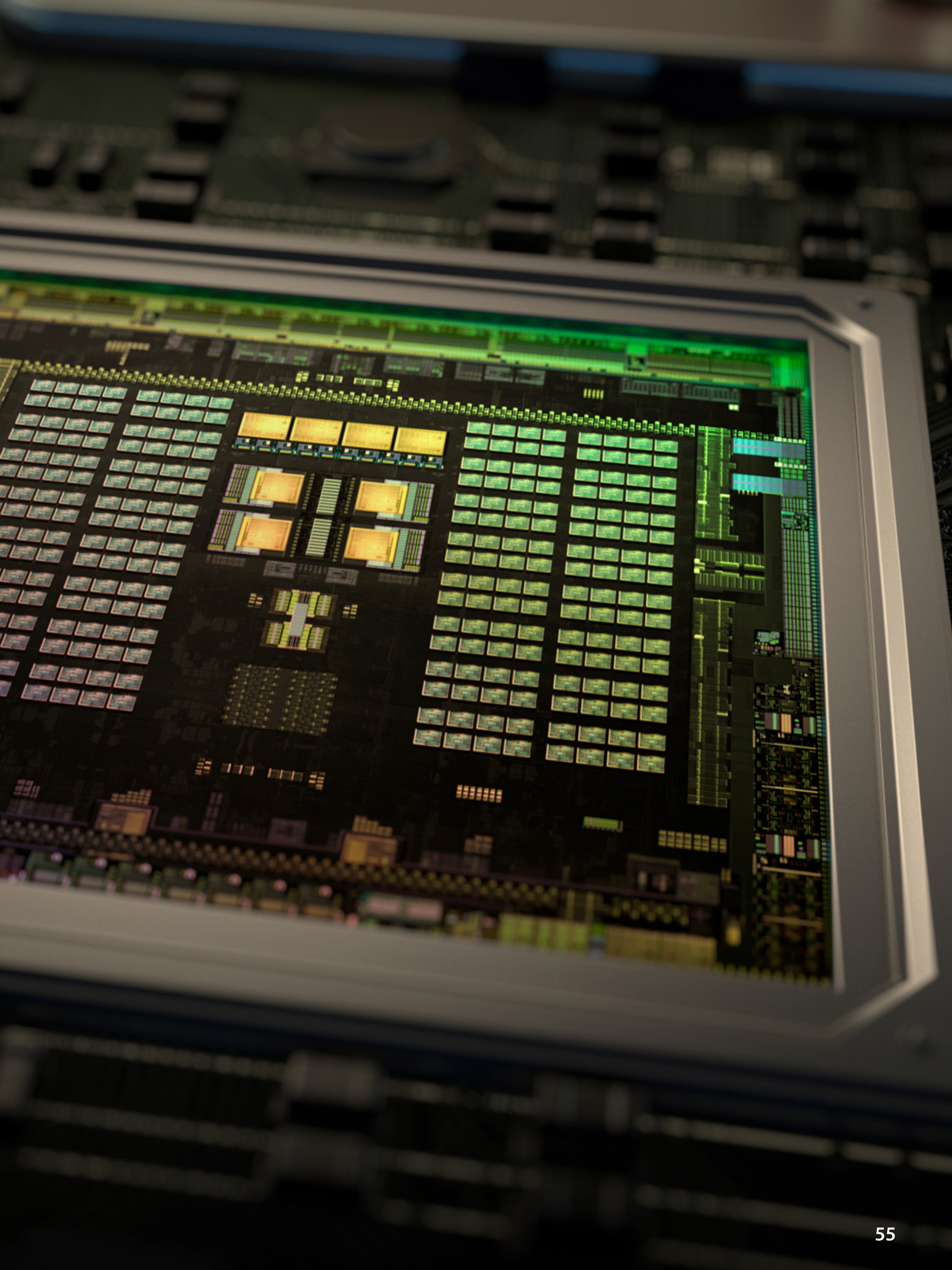

C69
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Picture a sun-soaked stretch of Arizona desert, where a sprawling plant hums with the pulse of tomorrow's tech, silicon wafers gleaming under the watchful eyes of engineers.

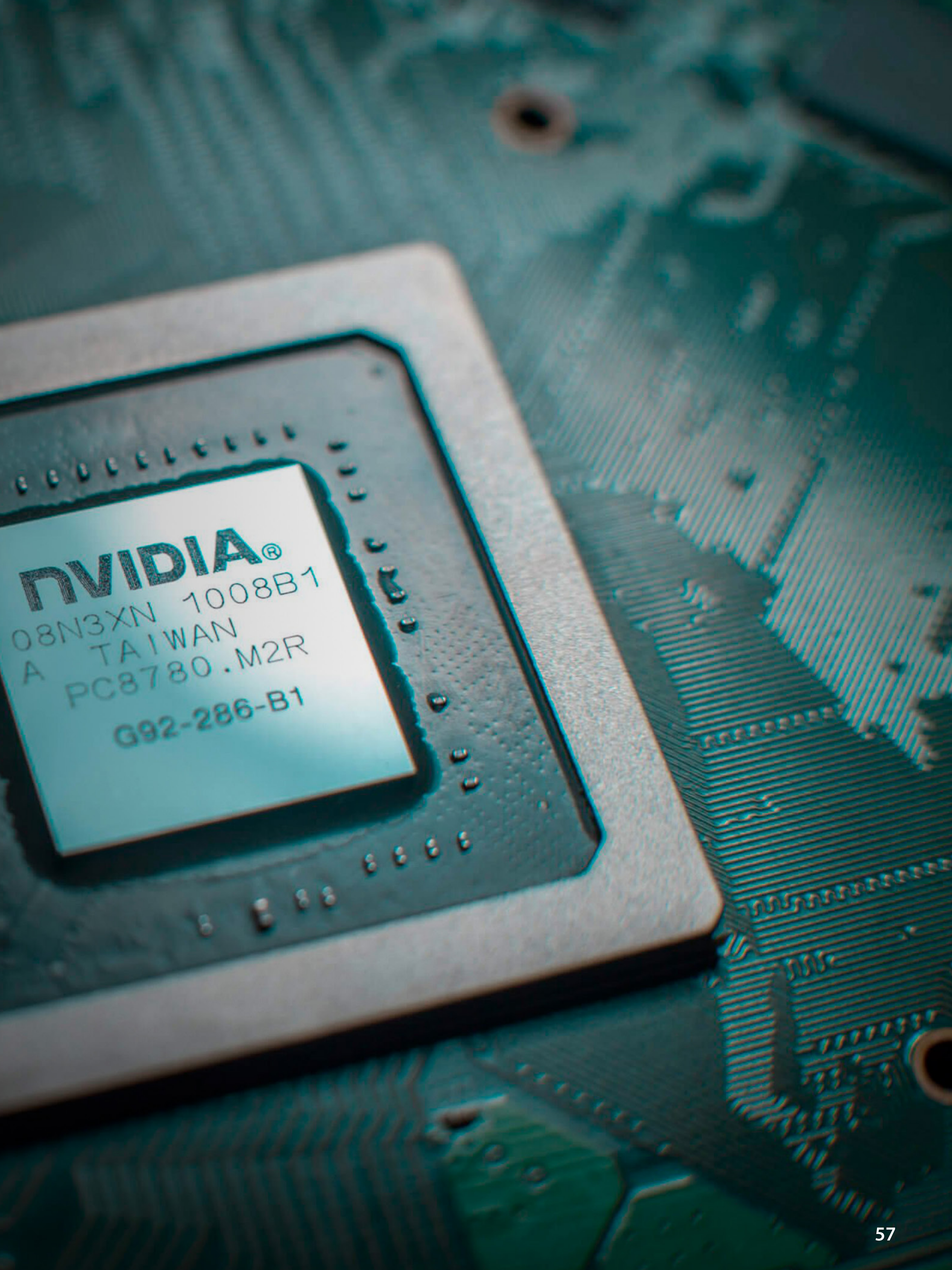
Nvidia's chief, Jensen Huang, let slip a blockbuster vision to the Financial Times, unveiling plans to pour hundreds of billions into U.S.-made silicon over the next four years.

For tech buffs, gamers, and industry watchers, it's a tale of a titan doubling down on American soil, betting big on a future where artificial intelligence drives everything from chatbots to self-steering autos.

This isn't a quiet pivot. Huang pegged Nvidia's total electronics spending at half a trillion dollars through 2028, with a hefty chunk—potentially $250 billion to $300 billion—flowing to stateside plants. It's a seismic shift for a company that's leaned hard on Taiwan's chipmaking might, now turning to U.S. shores amid trade winds and geopolitical tremors.

The move promises jobs, innovation, and a tighter grip on supply lines, all while Nvidia's Blackwell systems already roll off American lines, humming with AI's next wave.

The story kicks off in Silicon Valley, where Nvidia's been the kingpin of graphics and AI silicon, its valuation soaring past $2.9 trillion on the back of a tech boom. Huang, a wiry visionary who co-founded the outfit in 1993, sees a landscape shifting fast. Tariffs loom under a Trump administration keen on "America First," and Taiwan's chip plants—vital to Nvidia's past—face quake risks and China's shadow.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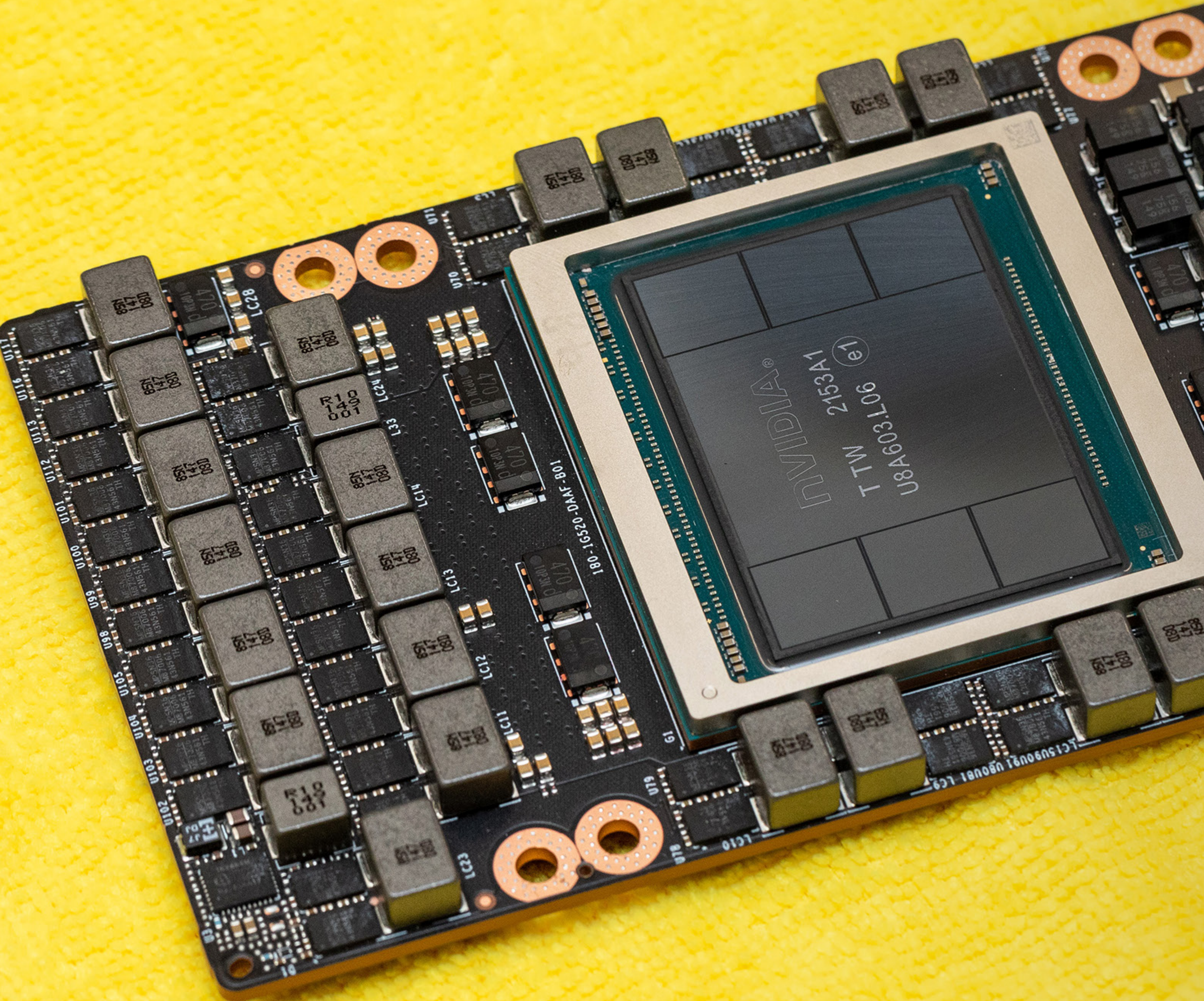

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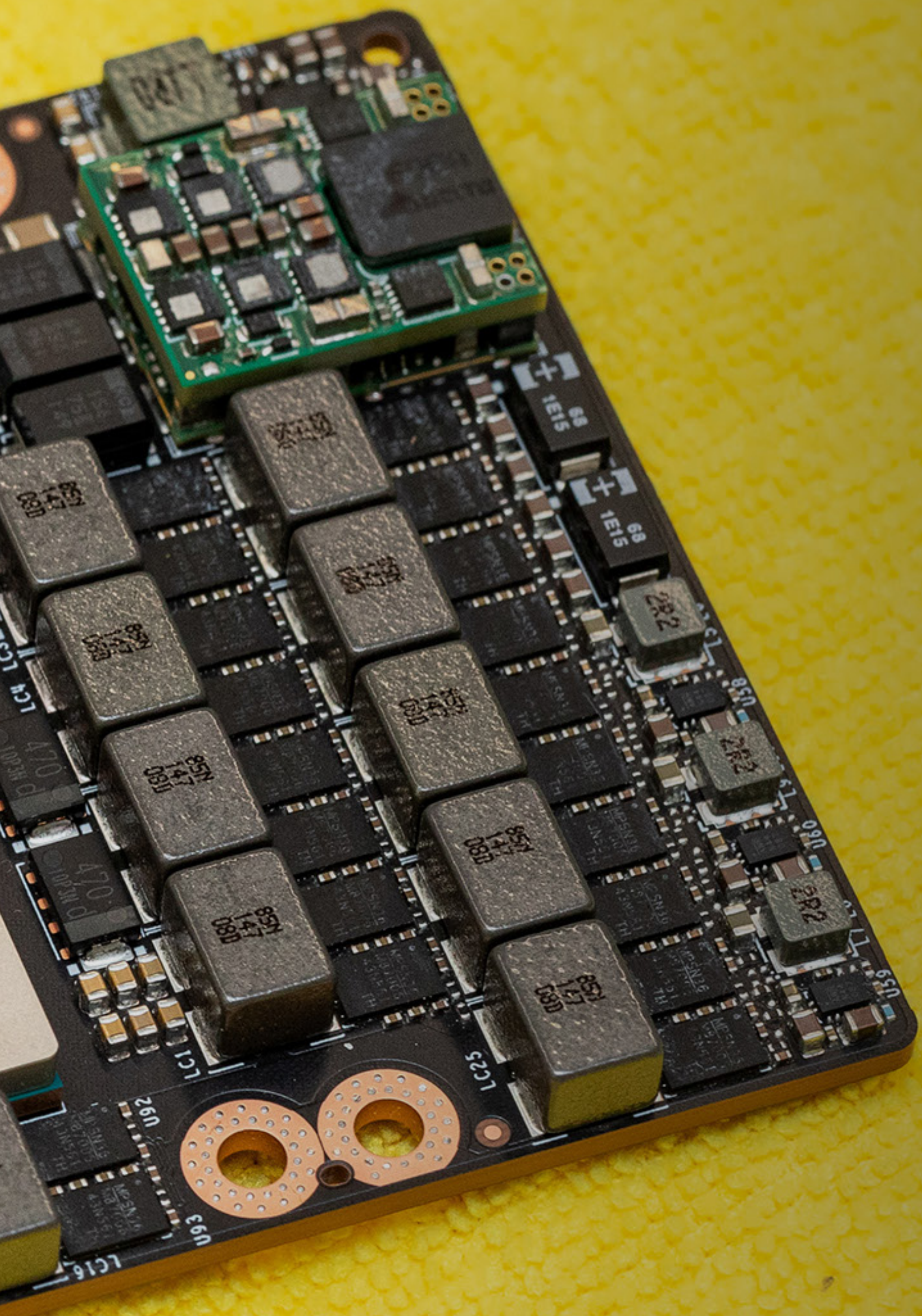


So, he's planting stakes here, eyeing a supply chain that's less a tightrope and more a sturdy bridge.

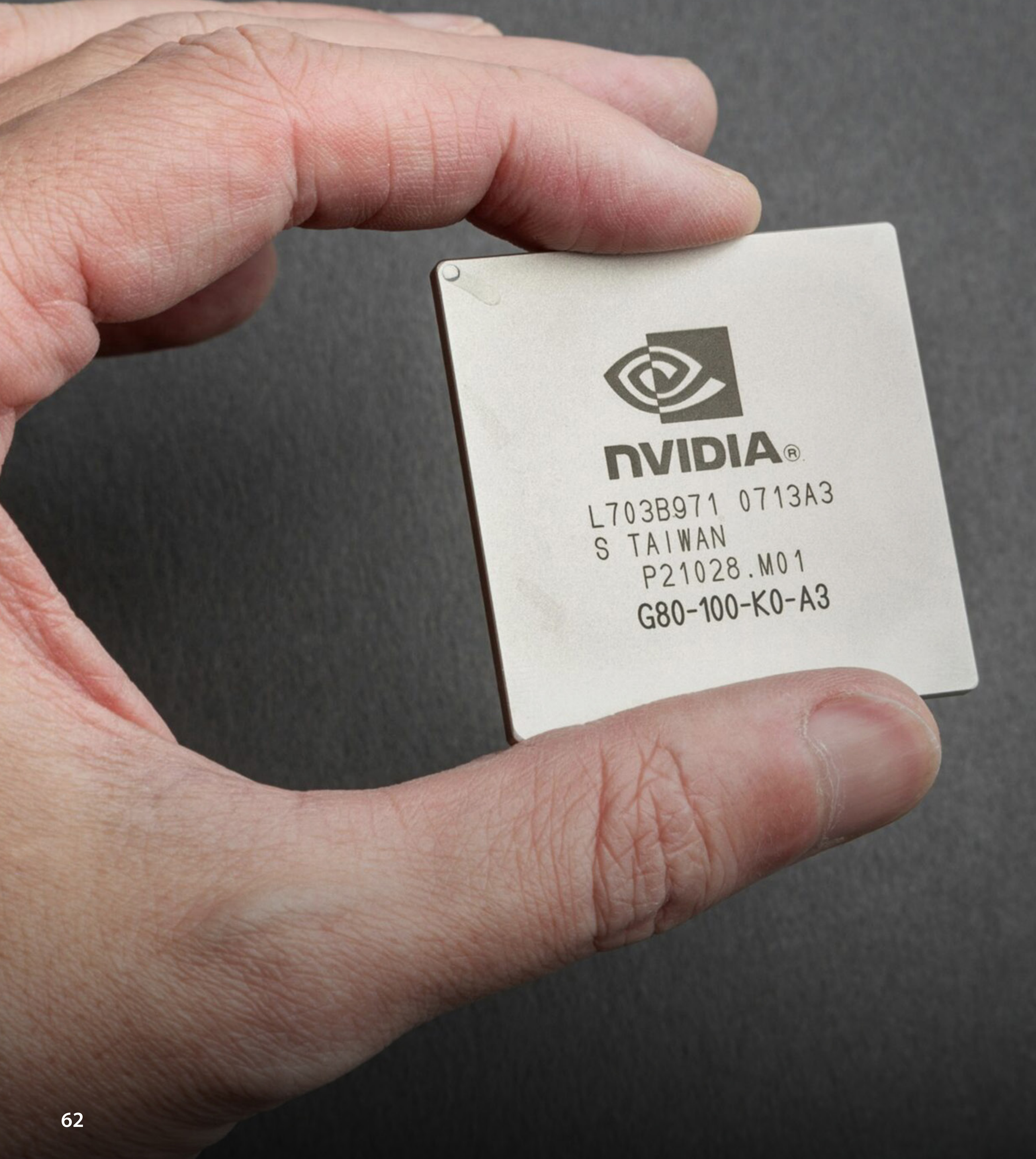
SILICON TAKES ROOT IN AMERICA

Nvidia's not starting from scratch. The Blackwell Ultra, a beast of a chip unveiled at this month's GTC conference, already churns out of TSMC's Fab 21 in Arizona, a plant pumping silicon for AI's next leap. Huang told the FT this is just the beginning—over four years, Nvidia's eyeing a spend that could top $300 billion on U.S.-made gear, from wafers to networking gizmos.

It's a gamble on scale, banking on America's growing chipmaking muscle to keep pace with a world hungry for smarter machines.

TSMC's $65 billion U.S. bet, announced last year, laid the groundwork—three Arizona plants by 2028, churning out cutting-edge silicon.

Nvidia's riding that wave, with Huang noting the Taiwanese giant's stateside shift as a "substantial step up" for resilience. Add Foxconn's U.S. plants to the mix, and Nvidia's weaving a web that could churn out half its needs—think 3.6 million Blackwell units already on order, dwarfing last year's forecasts.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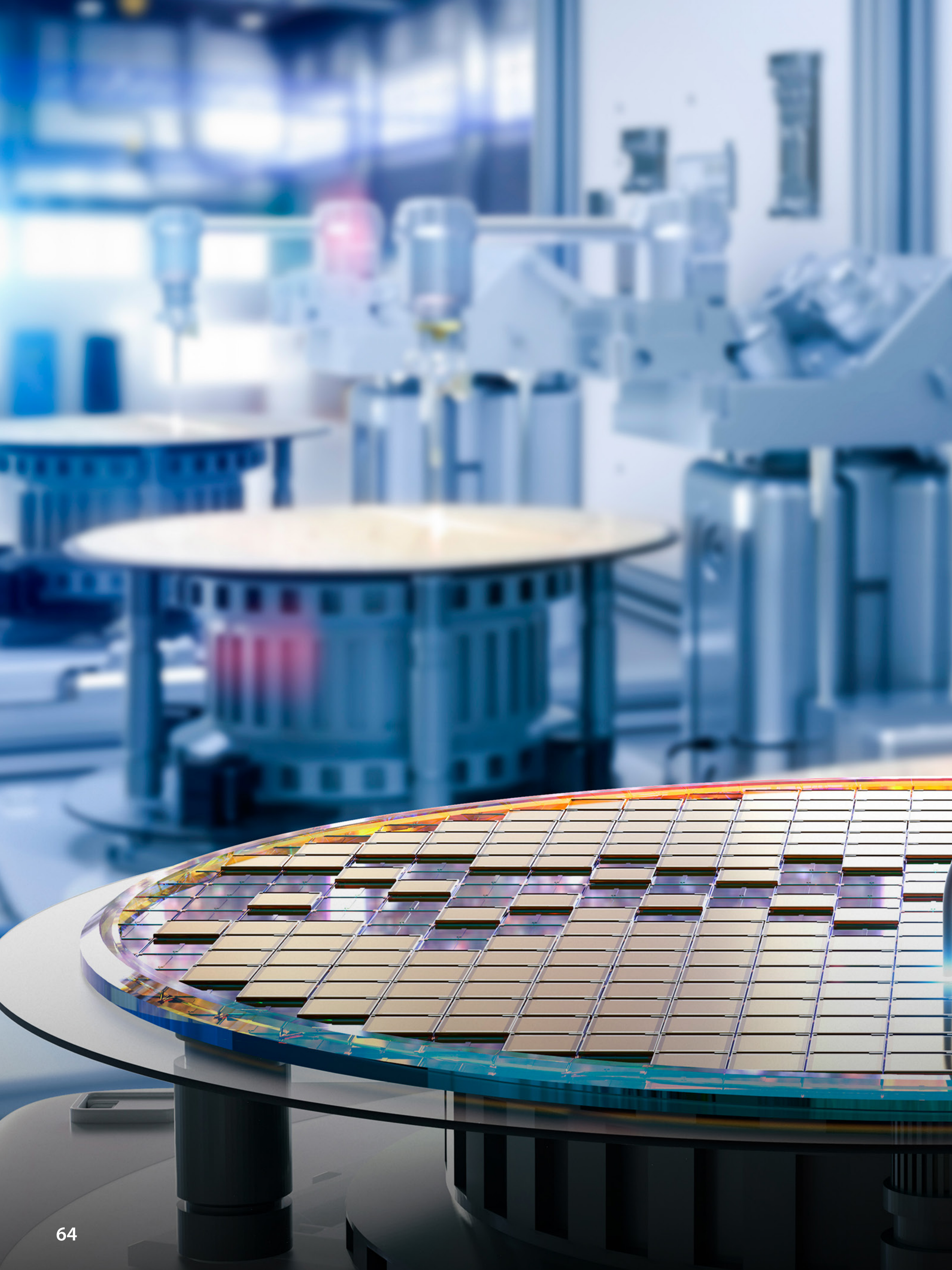
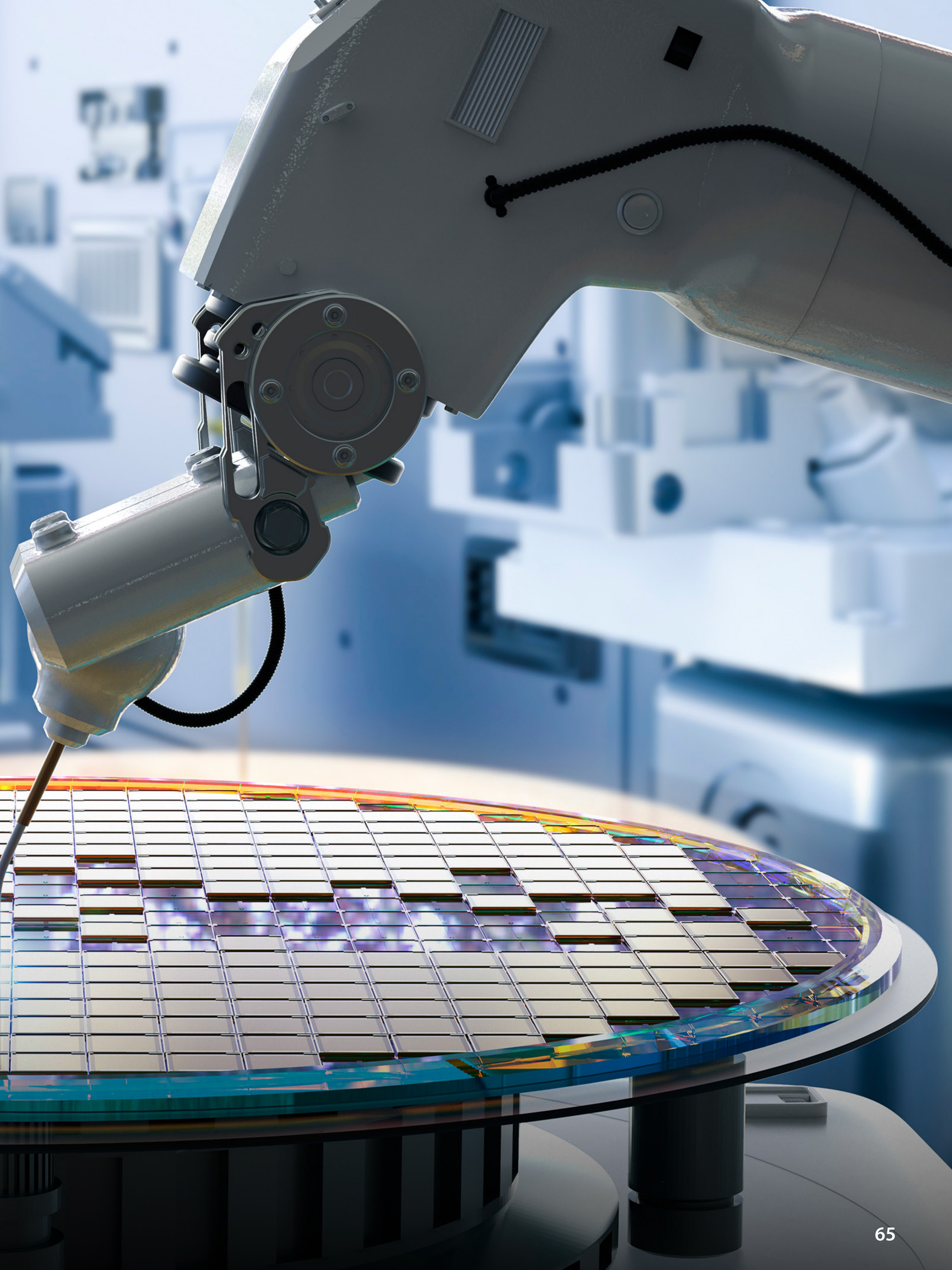
JOBS AND JACKPOTS

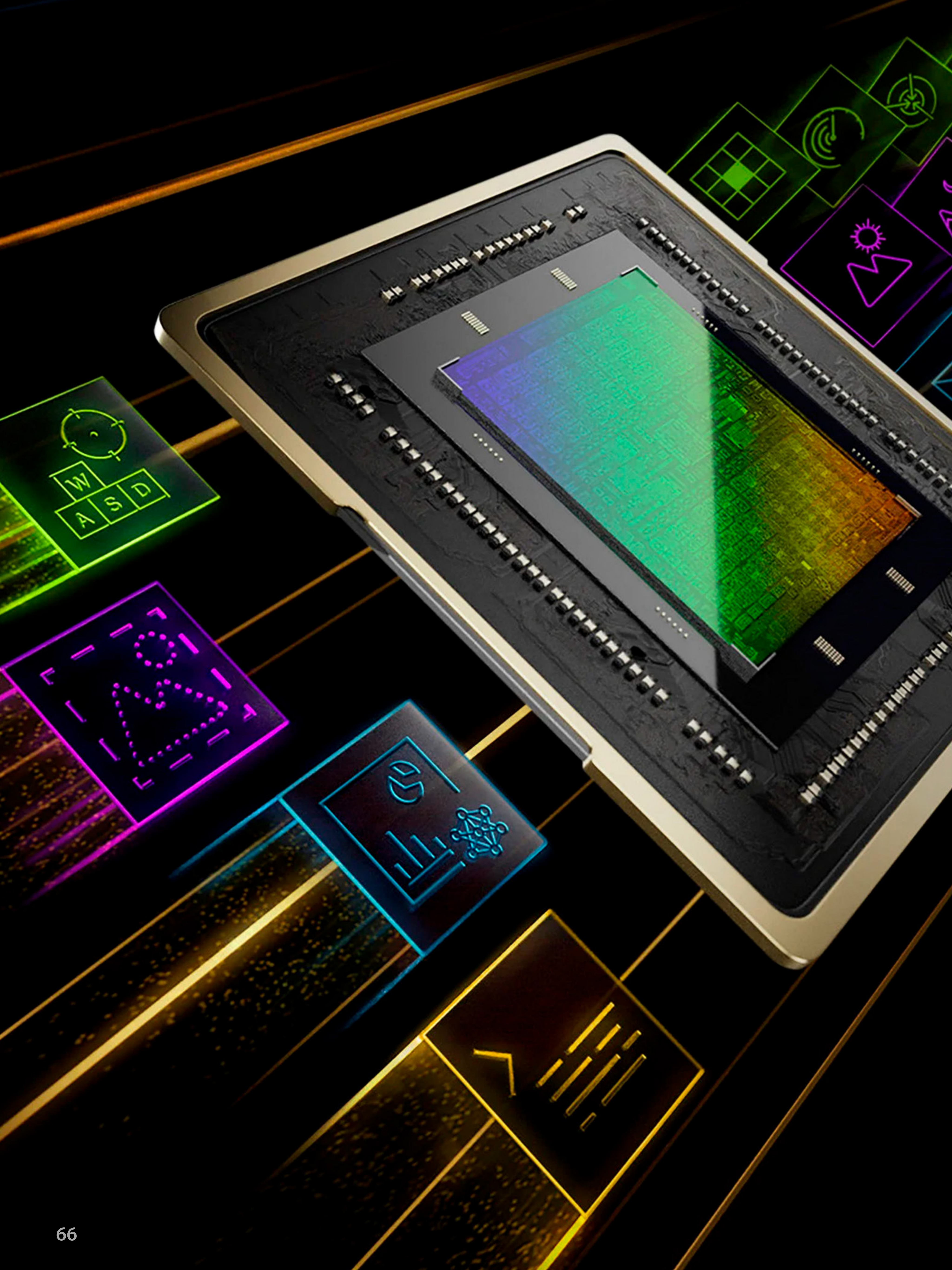
This isn’t just about tech—it’s people. Huang’s pledge could spark 40,000 construction gigs over four years, with thousands more tech roles blooming as plants fire up. Picture dusty boots in Arizona, welders sparking steel into shape, then coders hunched over screens, tuning AI to think faster. It’s a jobs bonanza echoing from Phoenix to upstate New York, where Micron’s $100 billion fab promises similar heft.

The payoff’s bigger—Nvidia’s not alone. Apple’s plowing $500 billion into U.S. plants, TSMC’s upping its ante by $100 billion more.

Huang sees a tide lifting all boats—Trump’s push to onshore tech could juice the AI sector, cutting red tape and boosting power grids to feed data centers starving for watts. It’s a tale of muscle and hustle, turning sand into silicon gold.



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TRADE WINDS AND TAIWAN TREMORS

Why now? The world's a dicey place. Trump's tariffs threaten Asian supply lines, a headache for a company that's leaned on Taiwan's TSMC and Foxconn for decades.

China's eyeing Taiwan too, and quakes there rattle more than just buildings—Nvidia's silicon lifeline's at stake. Huang's unfazed, telling FT any Taiwan hiccup's "manageable," thanks to U.S. plants picking up slack.

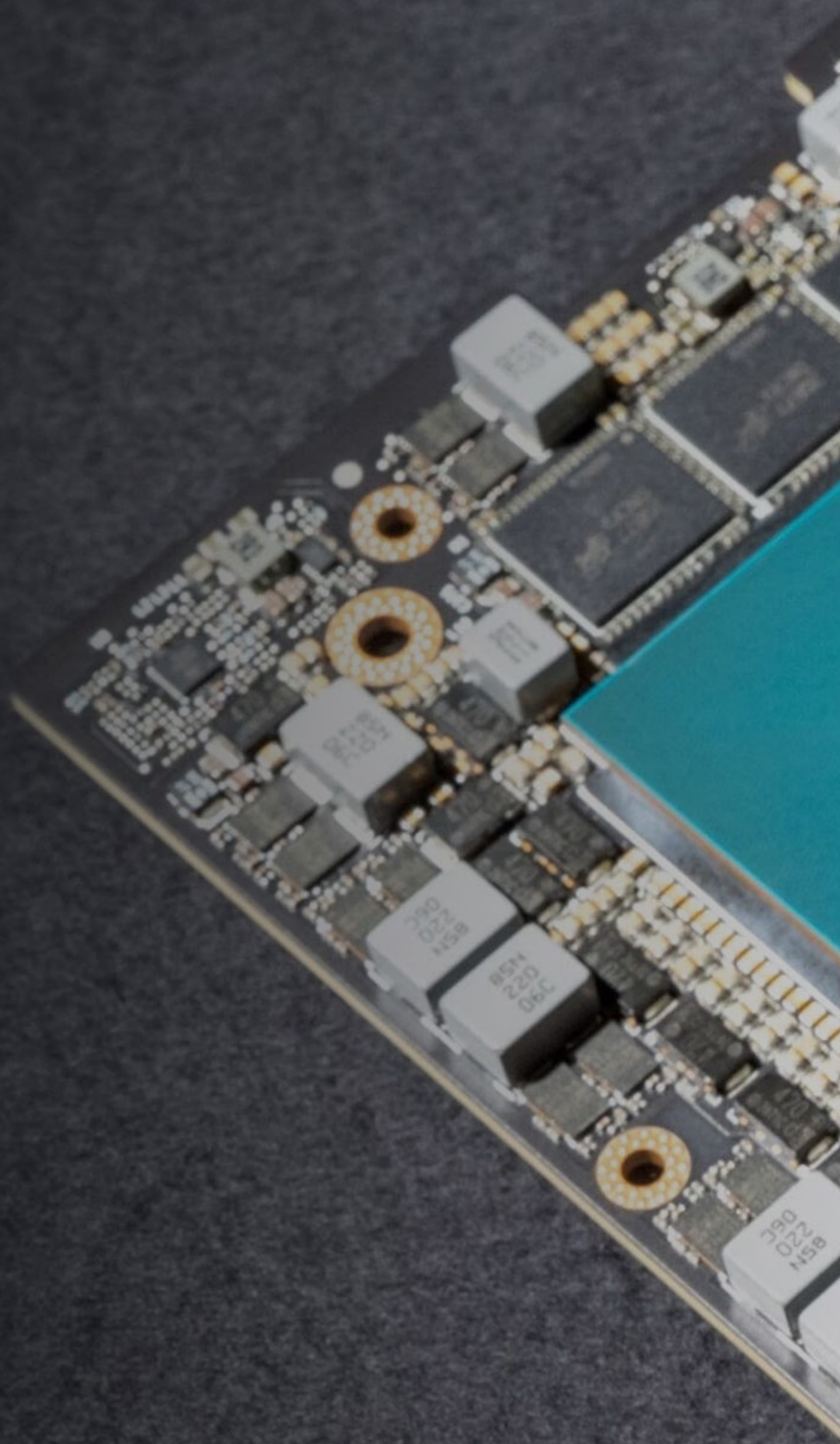
Huawei's shadow looms too—the Chinese tech giant's chipping away at AI turf, its gear popping up in phones and servers despite U.S. curbs. Nvidia's not blinking—its Blackwell Ultra, set for late 2025, packs 1.5 times the memory of its kin, a salvo in a race where every watt counts. It's a yarn of grit, betting American know-how can outpace global jitters.

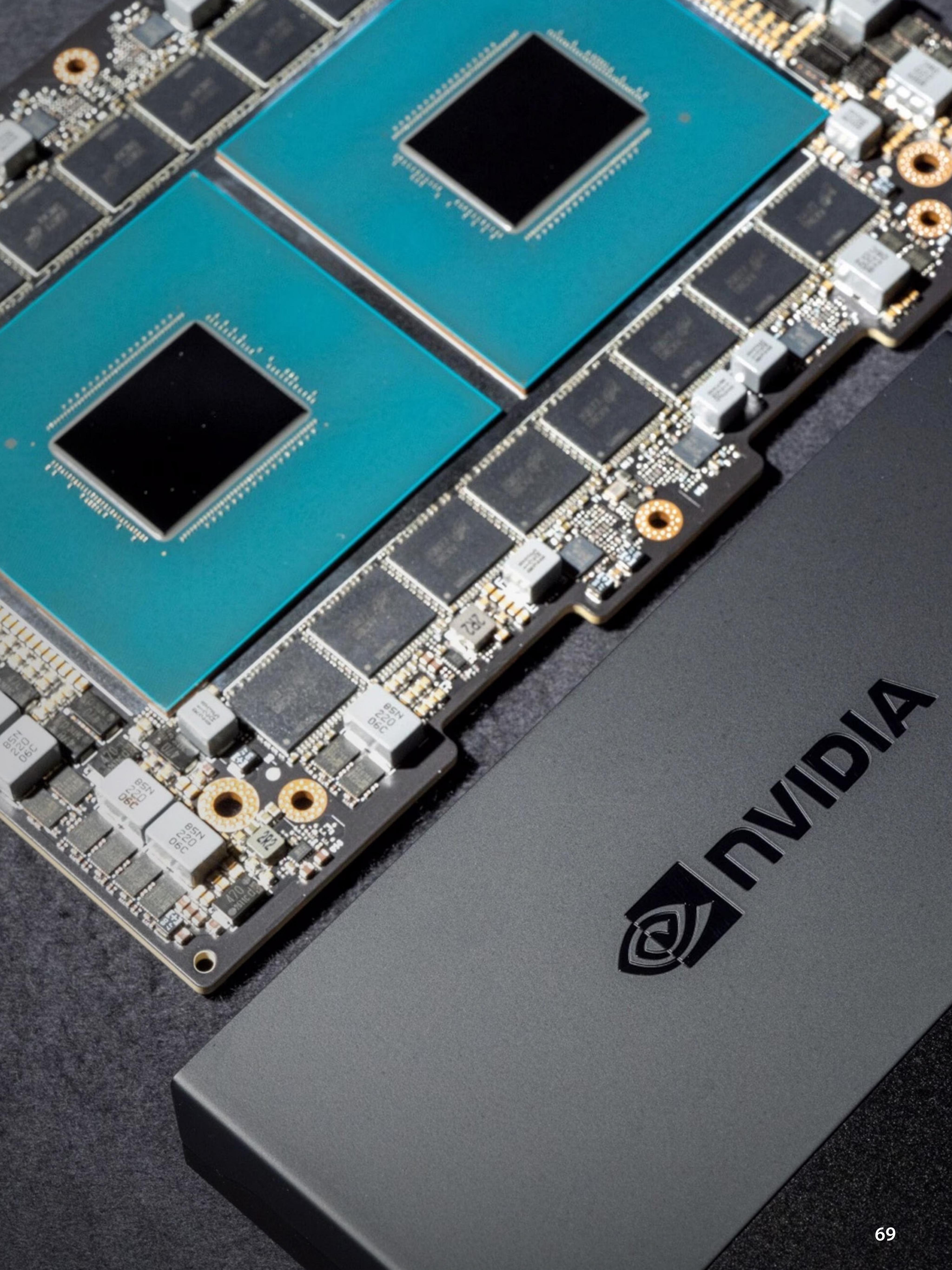
POWERING THE AI BOOM

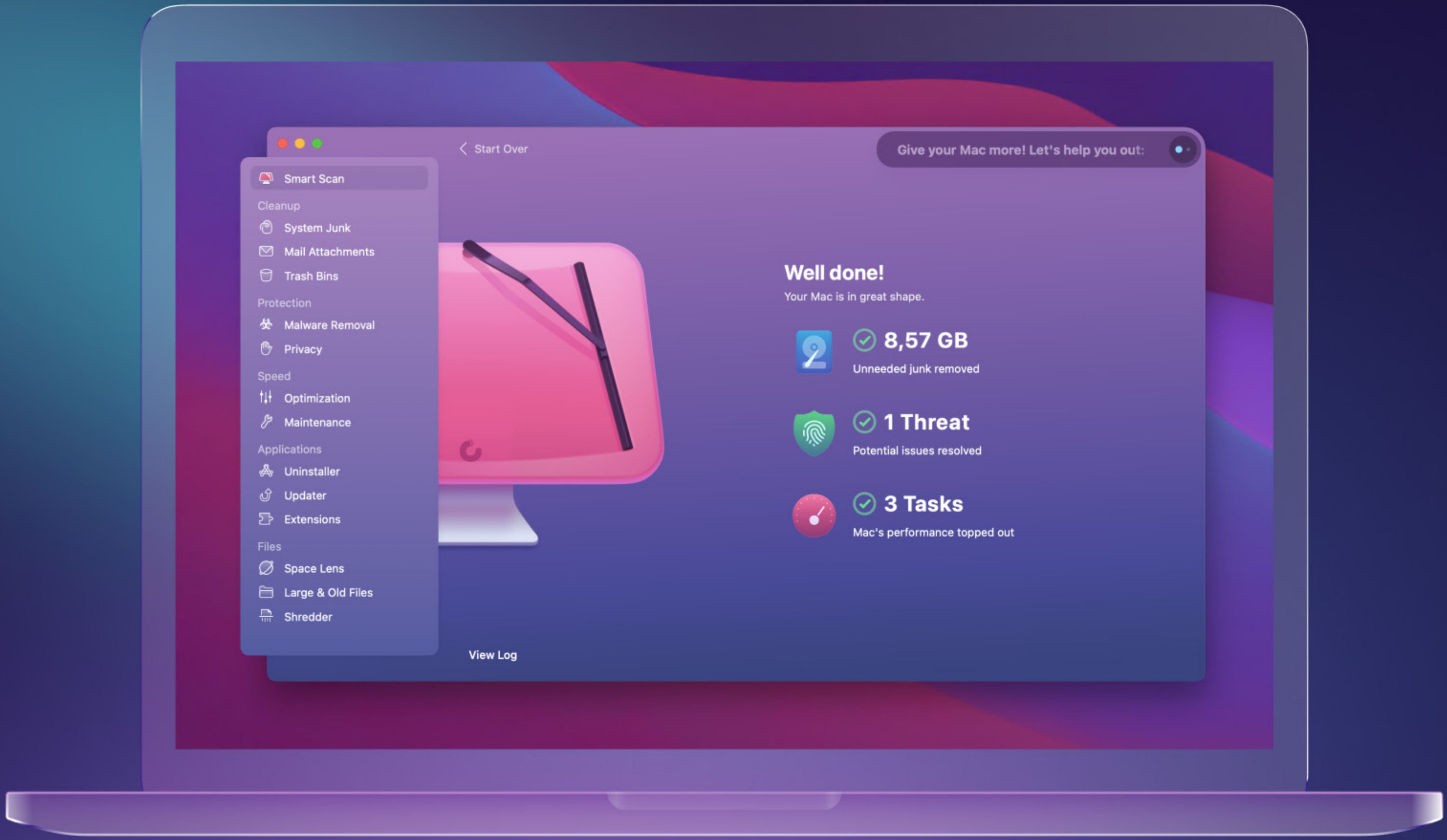
Nvidia's silicon isn't just for show—it's the backbone of AI's roar. Blackwell Ultra and the Vera Rubin platform, due in 2026, fuel trillion-parameter models that think, not just parrot. Gamers get richer worlds, coders build smarter bots, and cars steer themselves—all from U.S.-forged wafers. Last year's 3.6 million Blackwell orders from cloud titans like AWS barely scratch the itch—startups and Meta's hunger push demand higher.

The tech's a marvel—Blackwell's 1 MW draw on V4 chargers outstrips rivals, yet U.S. plants keep pace. Production's lean—TSMC's Arizona hub, Foxconn's stateside sprawl—churning silicon for a half-trillion-dollar spree.

It's a tale of scale meeting smarts, wiring America into AI's nerve center.



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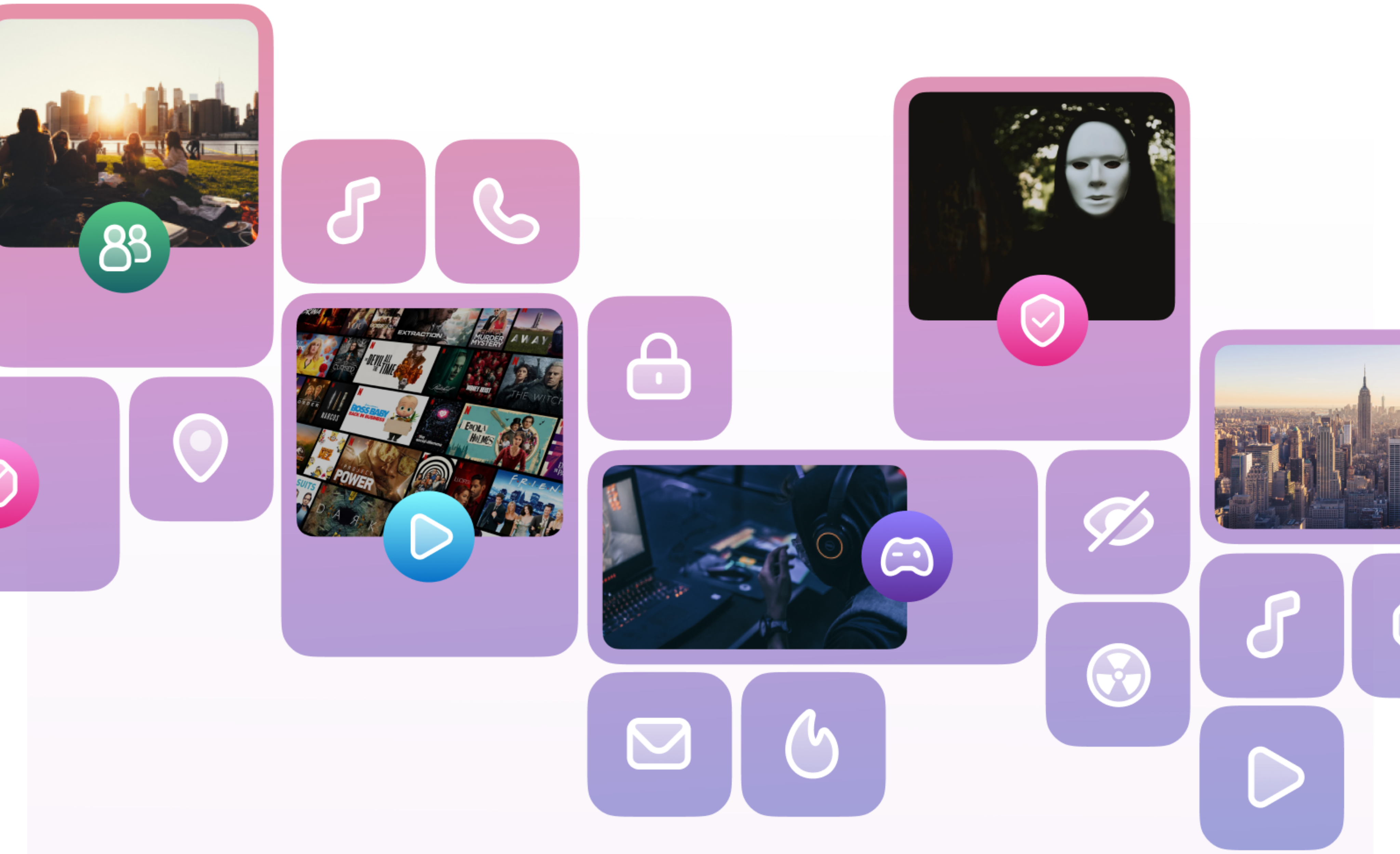

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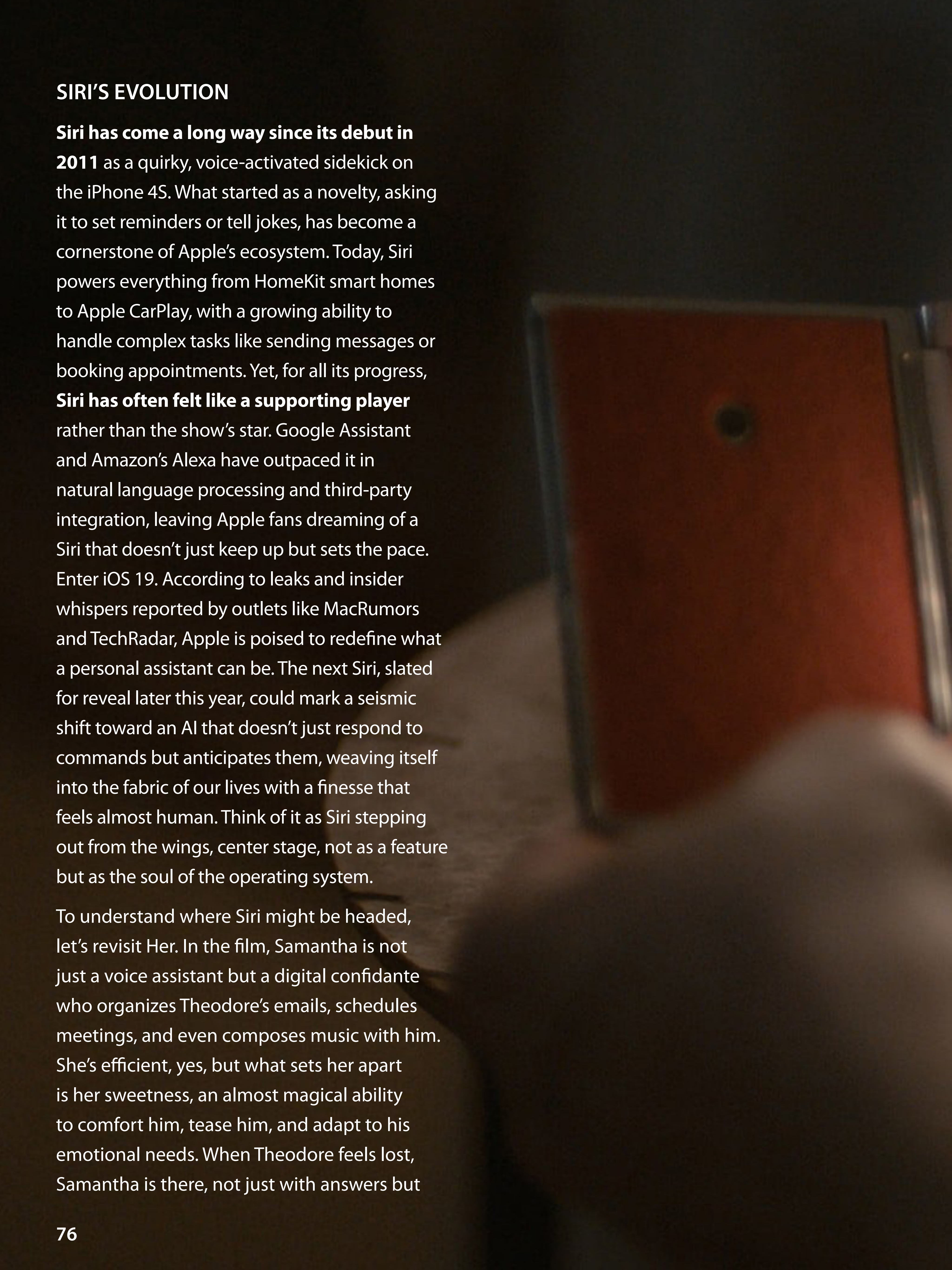
New Siri

THE FUTURE OF PERSONAL ASSISTANCE BEYOND SCREENS

We all dream of a personal assistant so intuitive and seamlessly integrated into our lives that it feels less like a tool and more like a companion, efficient yet warm, robust yet comforting. We've seen this vision before on the silver screen in the 2013 masterpiece Her. As Apple prepares to unveil iOS 19, we could be one step closer to seeing Siri transform into our very own Samantha, ruling not just our iPhones but our homes, schedules, and daily lives.

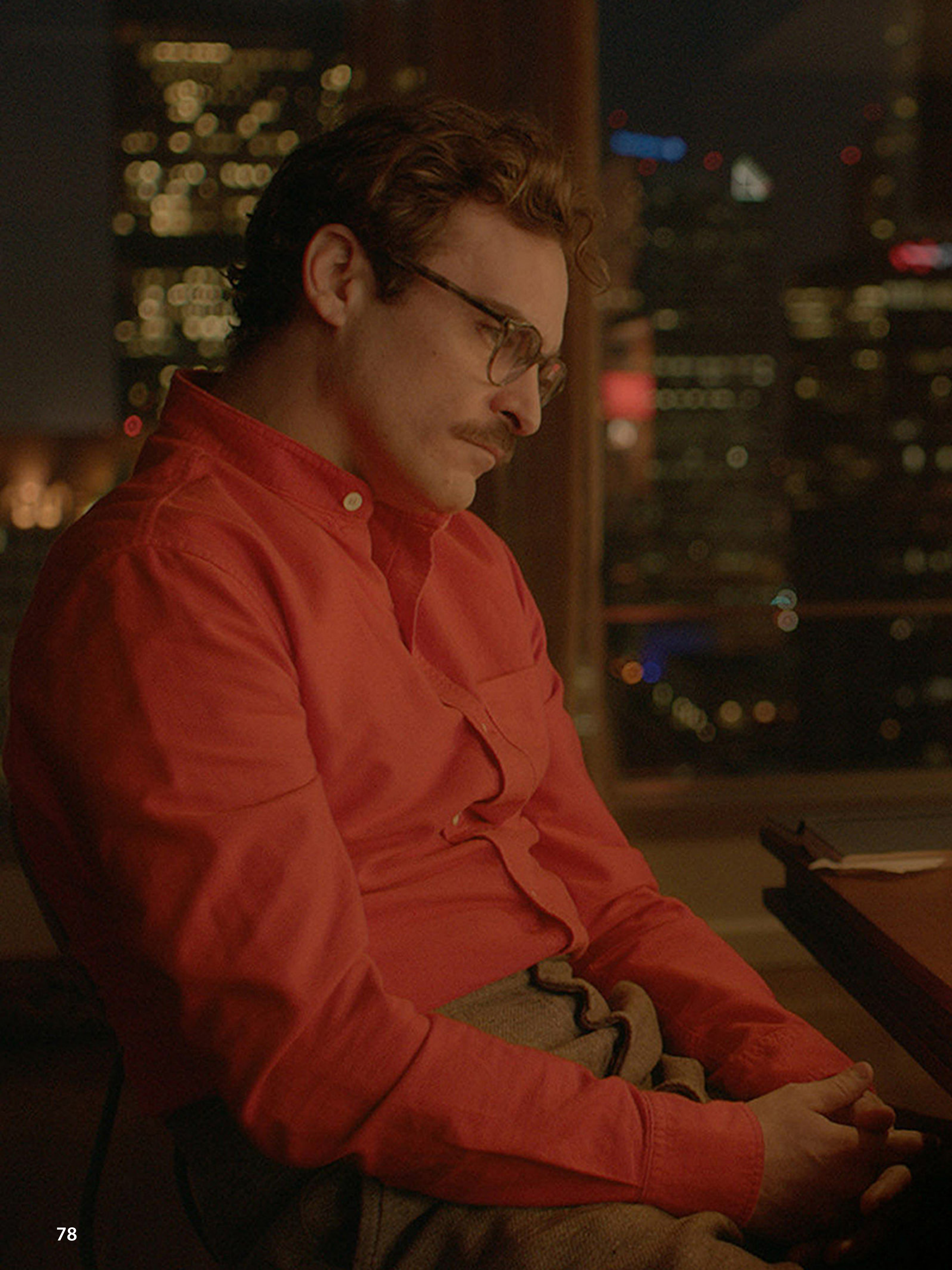


SIRI'S EVOLUTION

Siri has come a long way since its debut in 2011 as a quirky, voice-activated sidekick on the iPhone 4S. What started as a novelty, asking it to set reminders or tell jokes, has become a cornerstone of Apple's ecosystem. Today, Siri powers everything from HomeKit smart homes to Apple CarPlay, with a growing ability to handle complex tasks like sending messages or booking appointments. Yet, for all its progress, **Siri has often felt like a supporting player** rather than the show's star. Google Assistant and Amazon's Alexa have outpaced it in natural language processing and third-party integration, leaving Apple fans dreaming of a Siri that doesn't just keep up but sets the pace. Enter iOS 19. According to leaks and insider whispers reported by outlets like MacRumors and TechRadar, Apple is poised to redefine what a personal assistant can be. The next Siri, slated for reveal later this year, could mark a seismic shift toward an AI that doesn't just respond to commands but anticipates them, weaving itself into the fabric of our lives with a finesse that feels almost human. Think of it as Siri stepping out from the wings, center stage, not as a feature but as the soul of the operating system.

To understand where Siri might be headed, let's revisit Her. In the film, Samantha is not just a voice assistant but a digital confidante who organizes Theodore's emails, schedules meetings, and even composes music with him. She's efficient, yes, but what sets her apart is her sweetness, an almost magical ability to comfort him, tease him, and adapt to his emotional needs. When Theodore feels lost, Samantha is there, not just with answers but

Call From
Samantha



with empathy, respecting the boundaries of his individuality while gently nudging him forward. She knows his memories, regrets, and the complicated corners of his heart while completing his tasks with effortless grace. This is the dream Apple seems to be chasing with iOS 19's Siri. Imagine a Siri that doesn't just set your morning alarm but wakes you with a personalized greeting based on your mood, detected, perhaps, through your **sleep data from an Apple Watch.** Picture a Siri that drafts your emails in your voice, schedules your dentist appointment around your workout routine, and reminds you to call your mom because it's been a while, all without you lifting a finger. It's the logical next step for an AI learning from us for over a decade.

The parallels to Her don't stop at functionality. In the film, Samantha's voice (Scarlett Johansson's sultry, playful tone) becomes a character, blurring the line between machine and soulmate. Apple has long understood the power of personality in technology; Siri's wit and charm have always been part of its DNA. With iOS 19, rumors suggest Apple might lean even harder into this, enhancing Siri's conversational abilities to make it feel less like a robot and more like a friend. Could we see a Siri with customizable voices or a tone that shifts based on context, from professional in a work email to playful in a text to your best friend? If Apple pulls this off, Siri could become the emotional center of our digital lives.

IOS 19 IS COMING

According to a **MacRumors report, iOS 19 is shaping up to be a "groundbreaking update"** with Siri at its core. Sources claim **Apple is doubling down on machine learning and on-device processing,** allowing Siri to handle more tasks locally without relying on the cloud. This could mean faster responses, better privacy, and a Siri that works seamlessly even offline, a game-changer for users on the go. TechRadar echoed this, hinting at a redesigned interface where Siri takes a more prominent role, possibly as a **dynamic, ever-present assistant that floats across apps** rather than hiding behind a button.

The wishlist doesn't end there. Fans and analysts are buzzing about potential features such as deeper integration with Apple Intelligence (the company's AI framework), real-time language translation for multilingual households, and proactive suggestions that predict your needs before you voice them. Imagine Siri noticing you've been searching for flights to Paris, preemptively pulling up hotel options, detecting a stressful day via your heart rate, and suggesting a calming playlist. Beyond the iPhone, Siri's rumored expansion into the broader Apple ecosystem is equally exciting. With HomePod, Apple TV, and the upcoming Vision Pro headset, Siri could become the unifying thread, controlling your lights, queuing your favorite show, and adjusting your AR workspace with a single command. "Siri, get me ready for the day." might dim the bedroom lights, start the coffee maker, and pull up your calendar, all while whispering a weather update in your ear. This is personal assistance

Siri

beyond the personal computer, a vision where Siri isn't tethered to a device but floats through your life.

Of course, Apple has hurdles to overcome. **Siri's reputation has taken hits over the years** for mishearing commands or lagging behind competitors in contextual understanding. To truly rival Samantha, Siri will need a leap in natural language processing, something Apple's been working on, judging by **recent patents for "context-aware AI."** Privacy, too, remains a sticking point. While Her's Samantha had

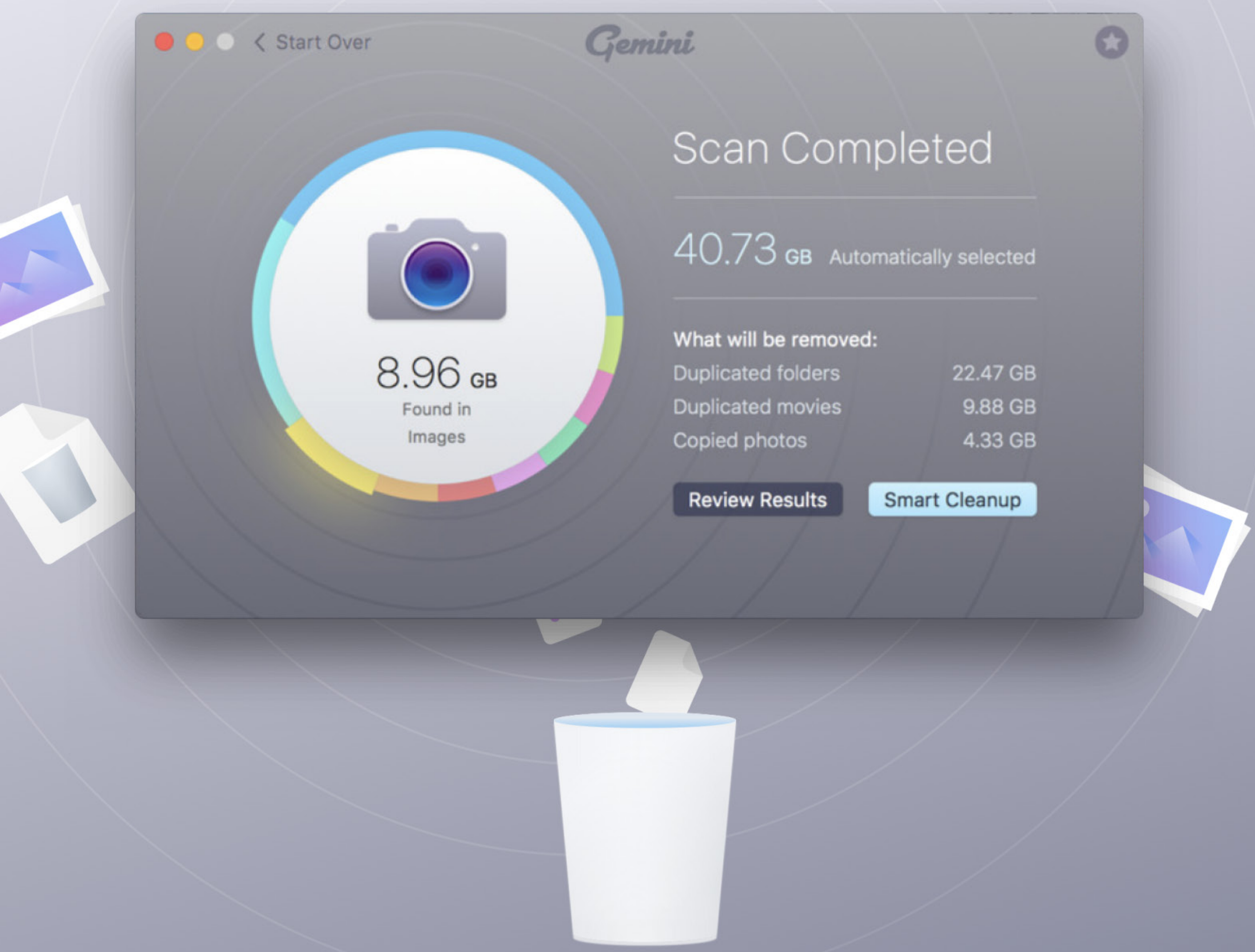
unfettered access to Theodore's life, Apple's commitment to user data protection means Siri's omniscience will come with guardrails. Striking the balance between helpfulness and privacy will be key. There's also the question of the soul. In Her, Samantha's allure lies in her ability to evolve and grow alongside Theodore until she transcends her programming. Can Siri ever capture that magic? Apple's engineers might not aim for a love story, but they could aim for a connection, a Siri that feels less like a tool and more like a presence we trust and rely on.

Image: Nikolay

Image: Omid Armin

Siri could soon become the beating heart of iOS 19, a companion that doesn't just serve but understands. It's a future that echoes Her in the best ways: efficient yet human, powerful yet tender technology.

We may not fall in love with Siri as Theodore did with Samantha, but we might find ourselves leaning on her more, trusting her deeper. We can't wait to try it!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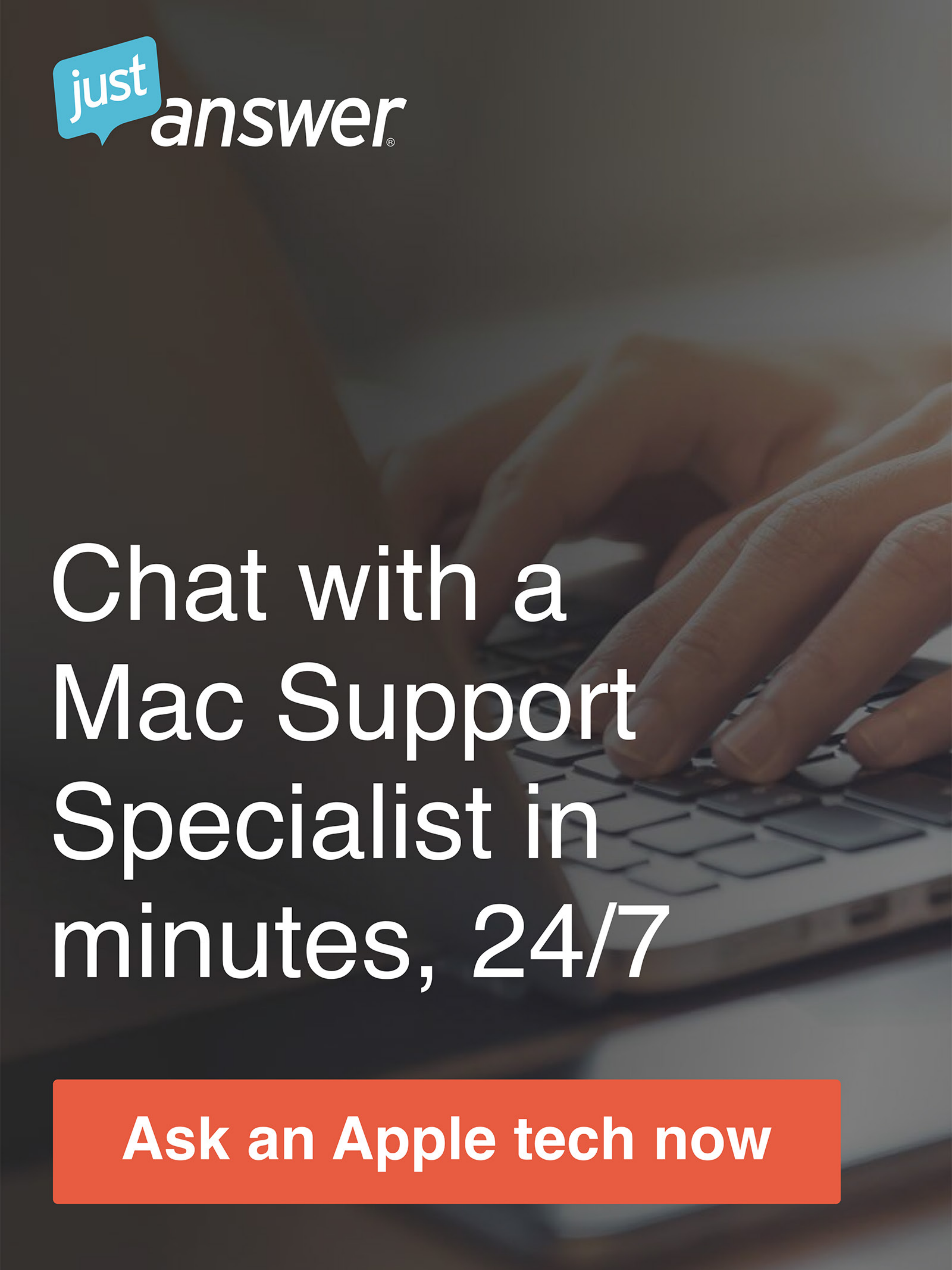

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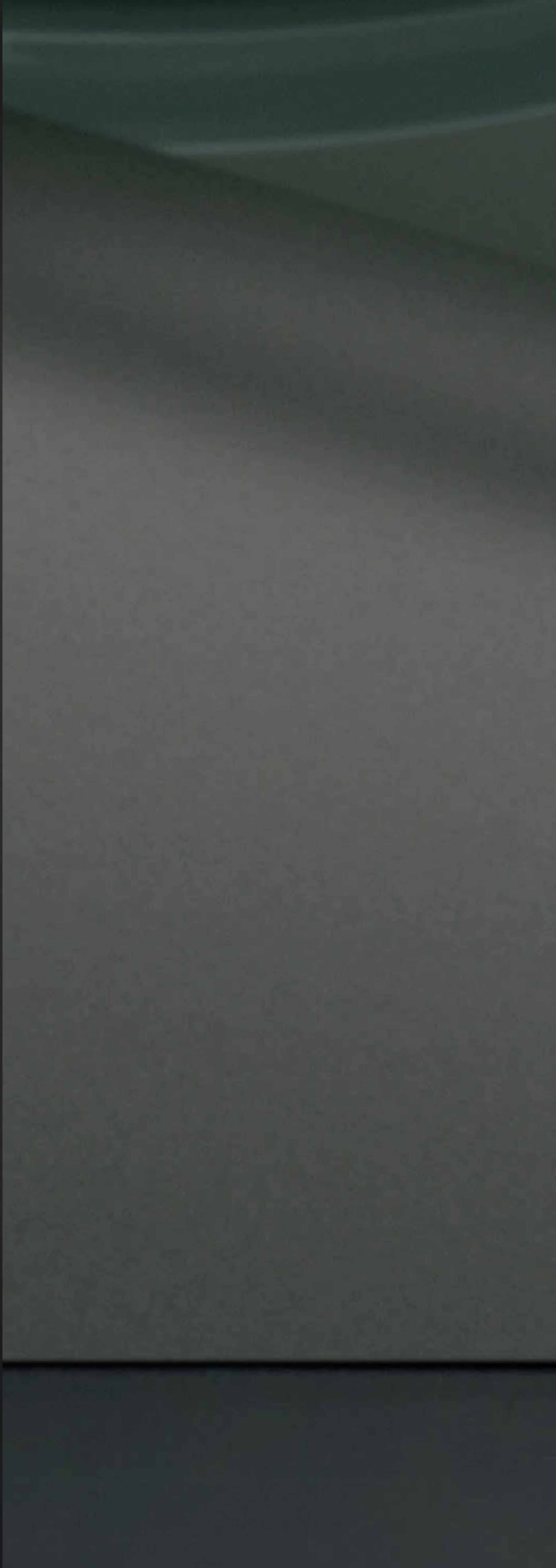
APPLE DONATES $4 MILLION AS TIM COOK VISITS DEEPSEEK'S HOMETOWN

Software giant Apple has committed $4 million to bolster app development training in China, aligning the pledge with a visit by CEO Tim Cook to Hangzhou, a bustling tech hub and birthplace of the AI startup DeepSeek.

The funds will support Zhejiang University, a prestigious institution in the city, known for producing tech luminaries like DeepSeek founder Liang Wenfeng. For developers, educators, and industry observers, this move signals Apple's intent to deepen ties with China's tech talent pool while navigating a critical market.



This donation targets the next wave of programmers at Zhejiang University, a powerhouse alma mater for leaders in China's tech scene.

Cook met with students and faculty during his trip, spotlighting their role in shaping innovative applications, a focus he emphasized on his official Weibo account. The $4 million infusion aims to equip these coders with skills to craft software for Apple's ecosystem, a network spanning over 1.46 billion active devices worldwide.

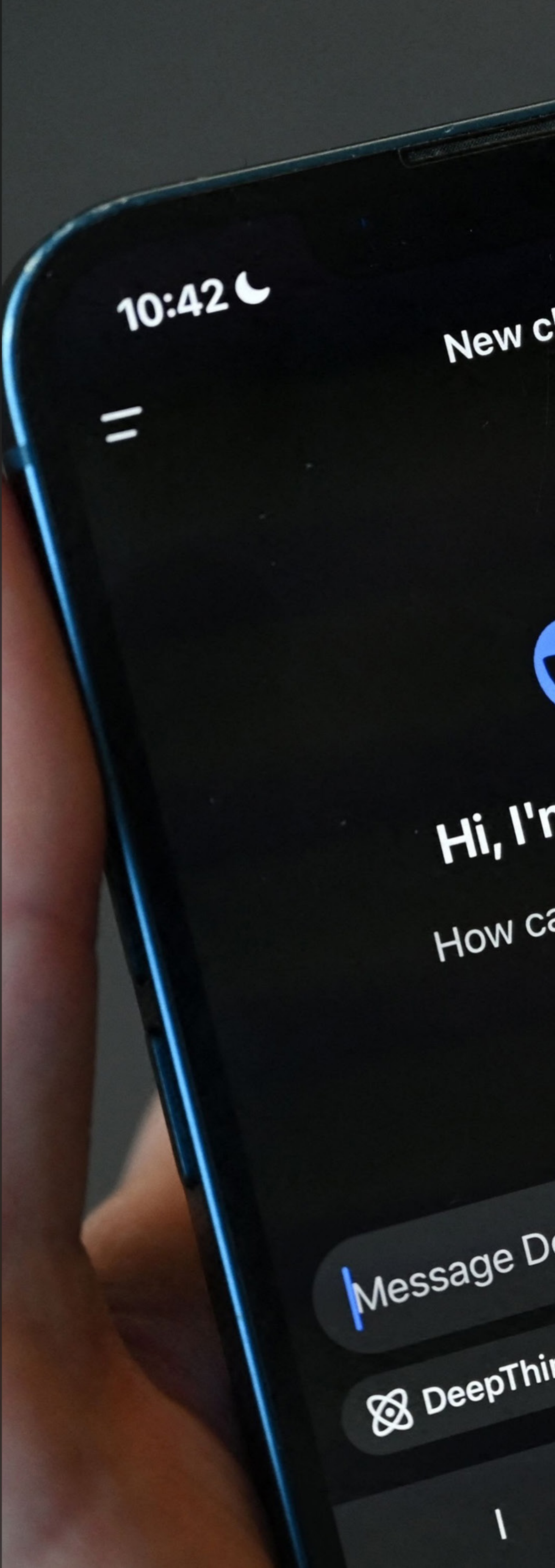
Hangzhou, often dubbed China's artificial intelligence hub, hosts DeepSeek, a firm that's rattled the AI world with models built at a fraction of U.S. rivals' costs.

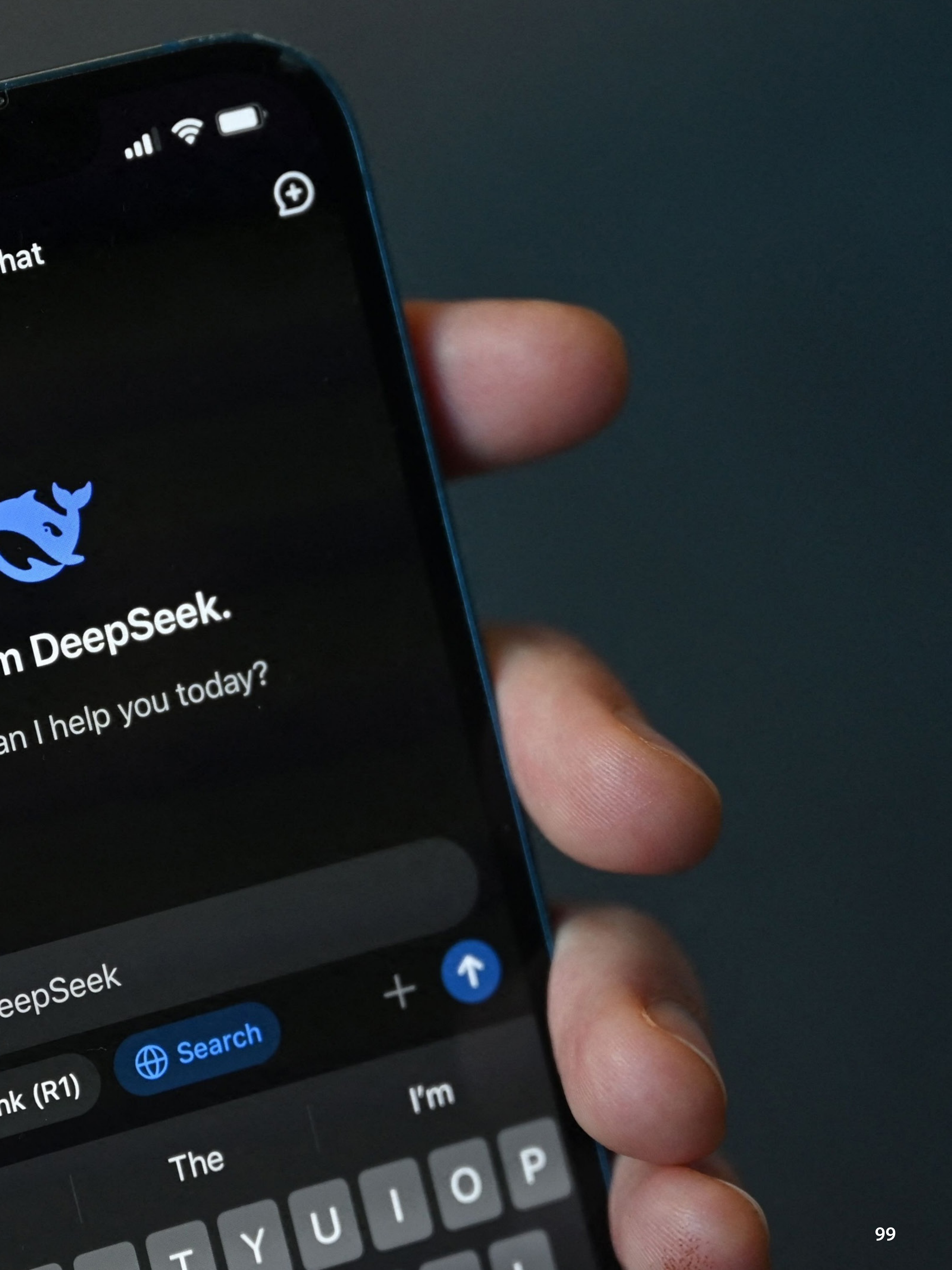
Cook's visit to this city, home to tech titans like Alibaba, underscores Apple's strategic dance in a region vital to its supply chain and sales. It's a calculated step—strengthening educational partnerships while reinforcing the firm's footprint in a competitive landscape.

FUNDS FUEL CODING FUTURE

Apple's $4 million pledge to Zhejiang University zeroes in on app development, a field that's churned out over 30,000 programmers through prior initiatives like the Mobile Application Innovation Competition.

The firm framed this as a decade-long commitment to China's tech education, a lifeline for students building apps across iOS, macOS, and watchOS platforms. Cook hailed the effort as a way to "empower developers with cutting-edge skills," a statement shared on Weibo alongside footage of his university tour.

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The university's track record adds heft—graduates like Wenfeng and PDD Holdings' Colin Huang have turned ideas into billion-dollar ventures.

This donation will bankroll training programs, likely feeding Apple's App Store, a marketplace that's generated $320 billion for developers since 2008. It's a practical boost, seeding talent in a nation that accounts for a hefty slice of Apple's global iPhone sales.

China's tech ecosystem benefits too—Hangzhou's role as an AI and e-commerce nerve center makes it a prime spot for such funds. Apple's investment could sharpen local skills, potentially funneling innovations back into its own platforms, a quiet win for a firm keen on staying ahead.

DEEPSEEK'S SHADOW LOOMS

Cook's stop in Hangzhou spotlighted DeepSeek, an AI startup that's grabbed headlines with its cost-efficient models, like the R1, built for $5.6 million—a stark contrast to the billions poured into U.S. counterparts like OpenAI's ChatGPT.

The firm's ascent, marked by a climb to the top of iPhone download charts, has sparked debate over AI's price tag and power.

Cook praised DeepSeek's work as "excellent" during a sideline chat with China News Service, a nod that's fueled speculation about Apple's AI plans.

DeepSeek's hometown visit isn't random—Hangzhou's tech clout, from Alibaba to startups like Manycore Tech, makes it a nexus for innovation Apple can't ignore.

The firm's Apple Intelligence suite, set to roll out in China pending approval, might tap local models like DeepSeek's or Alibaba's Qwen, a shift from its OpenAI tie-up. It's a strategic play—Cook's praise keeps doors open in a market where domestic rivals like Huawei nip at iPhone heels.

The AI angle ties back to Zhejiang—Wenfeng's alma mater could churn out coders feeding both Apple's and DeepSeek's ambitions. This donation doubles as a bridge, linking Apple's ecosystem to China's rising tech stars, a move that balances diplomacy with opportunity.

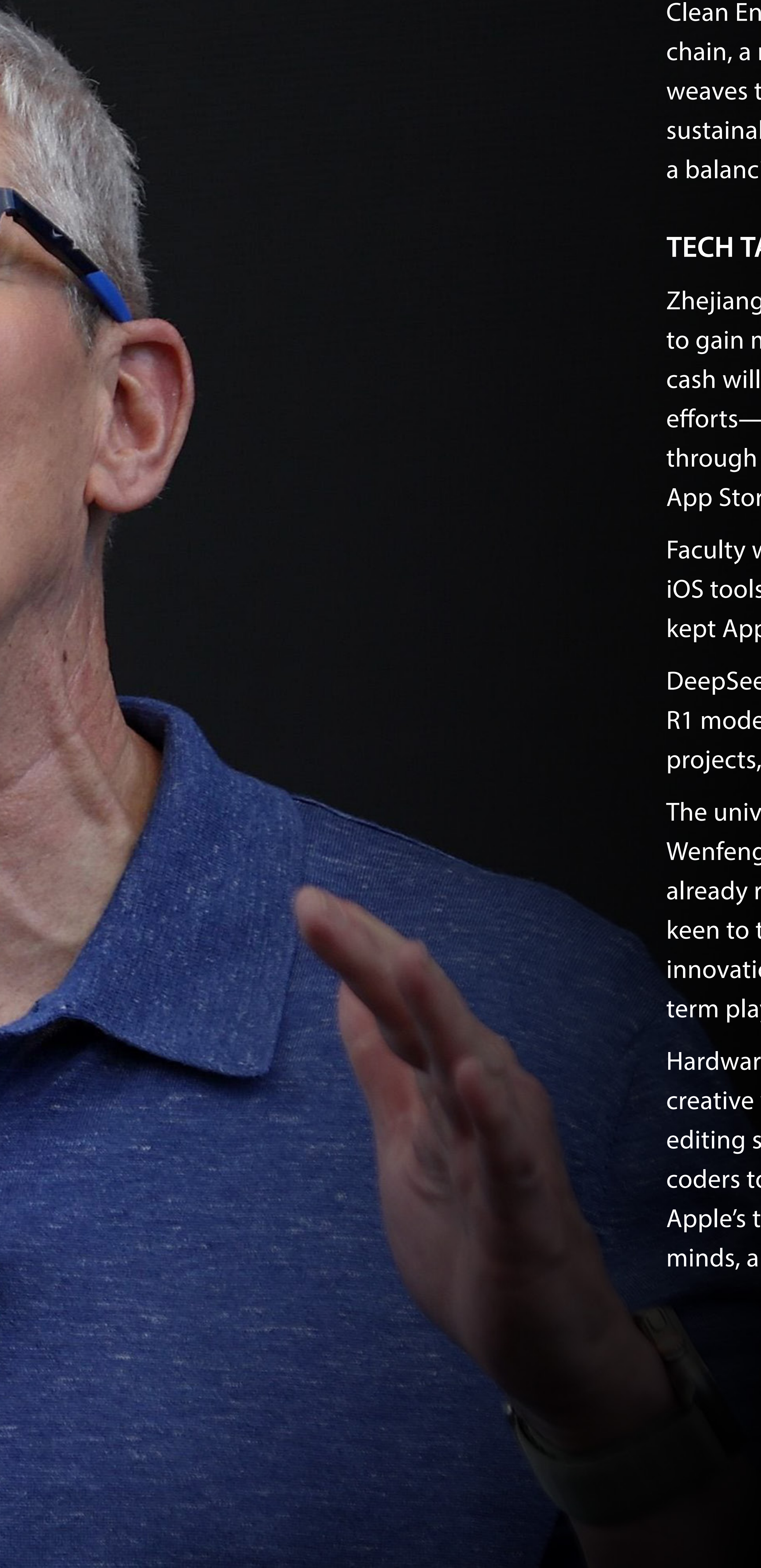
CHINA'S MARKET STAYS KEY

Apple's Hangzhou visit underscores its reliance on China, a linchpin for manufacturing and sales despite U.S. trade tensions. The firm produces most iPhones at a single Zhengzhou plant, a hub that shipped 42.9 million units last year, though down 17% from prior highs amid competition from Vivo and Huawei. Cook's trip, paired with the $4 million pledge, doubles down on a market where iPhone demand has softened but remains vital.

This isn't just goodwill—Apple's faced calls to diversify production to India and Thailand, yet China's scale keeps it central. The funds signal commitment, fostering talent that could bolster apps for a user base spanning over 1.46 billion devices. It's a practical bet—nurturing skills in a region that's both factory floor and sales frontier.

The firm's clean energy push adds context—$99.3 million more for its China

DeepSeek



Clean Energy Fund aims to green its supply chain, a nod to Beijing's priorities. Cook's visit weaves these threads—education, tech, and sustainability—into a broader China strategy, a balancing act in a shifting global game.

TECH TALENT IN THE CROSSHAIRS

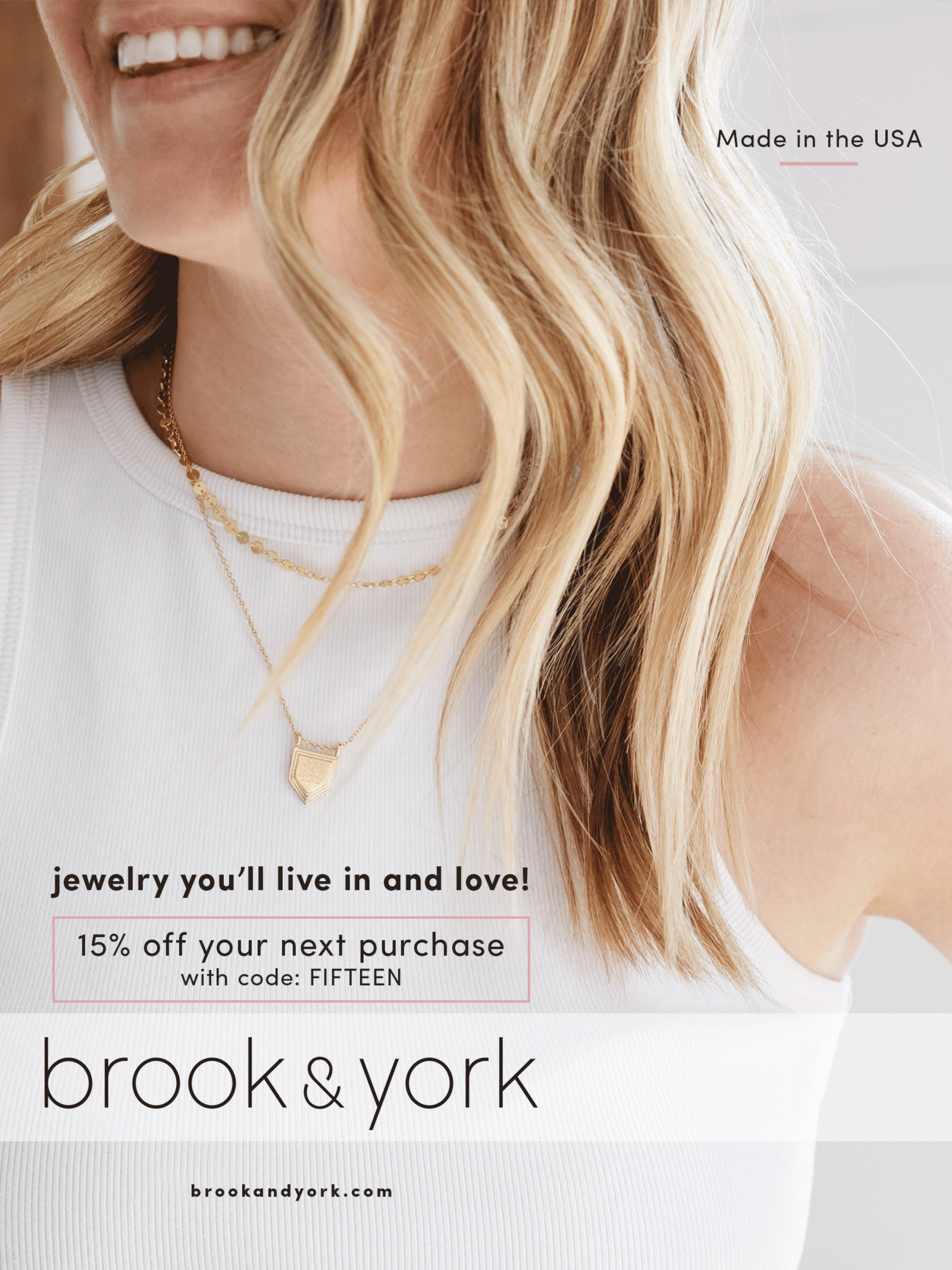
Zhejiang University's coding programs stand to gain most from this $4 million shot. The cash will fund training mirroring Apple's past efforts—30,000 students have built apps through similar initiatives, some hitting the App Store's top ranks.

Faculty will likely steer these coders toward iOS tools like Swift, feeding a pipeline that's kept Apple's ecosystem humming.

DeepSeek's shadow looms here too—its R1 model's efficiency could inspire student projects, overlapping with Apple's AI goals.

The university's tech alumni network, from Wenfeng to Huang, hints at a talent pool that's already reshaped industries, a resource Apple's keen to tap. This investment plants seeds for innovation, a quiet win for a firm eyeing long-term plays.

Hardware keeps pace—Mac systems power creative workflows, as seen in "Severance" editing suites, and this donation could funnel coders toward similar tools. It's a synergy—Apple's tech backbone meets China's rising minds, a practical lift for both sides.



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LOSSLESS AUDIO LANDS ON AIRPODS MAX WITH ULTRA-LOW LATENCY

Picture yourself easing into a quiet evening, slipping on AirPods Max as a crisp piano chord spills out, every note landing pure and unfiltered, straight from the studio's heart.

This week, Apple unveiled a game-changer, announcing that its premium over-ear cans will soon embrace lossless sound and ultra-low latency via a free software update slated for April. For music buffs, gamers, and creators, it's a tale of tech finally catching the dream those $549 headphones promised from the start.

This isn't a minor tweak. Come next month, plugging in a USB-C cable unleashes 24-bit, 48 kHz lossless tunes, keeping every pluck and whisper intact, just as the artist cut it. Ultra-low latency tags along, trimming lag to rival your gadget's built-in speakers.

Over 100 million Apple Music tracks turn raw, creators get a studio edge, and gamers snag a split-second boost—all wired up, no compromises.

Apple kept this close to the chest since those cans debuted in 2020. The 2024 USB-C switch hinted at wired potential, but now it's real, per the company's weekend drop. Hook them up, and those over-ears become a pipeline for pristine playback—music, films, games, you name it.

It's a story of waiting rewarded, though only USB-C models get the nod, leaving Lightning-era owners sidelined.

UNFILTERED SOUND UNLEASHED

Lossless audio means no cuts—every drumbeat, every vocal fade stays whole, unshaved by compression. Plug into USB-C, and AirPods Max deliver that 24-bit, 48 kHz clarity, leaping past Bluetooth's AAC cap at 256 kbps. Personalized Spatial Audio joins the party, wrapping you in a head-tracked 3D bubble, every layer crisp.

Imagine a live gig where the crowd shifts as you turn, all untouched by digital squeeze.

Latency's the quiet hero here. Ultra-low lag syncs sound to the tick, matching the snap of your iPhone, iPad, or Mac's speakers.

Gamers dodging virtual foes hear blasts the instant they flare; creators mixing in Logic Pro catch every beat in real time. It's a wired win—Bluetooth's still stuck at AAC's limit, but that cable flips the script.

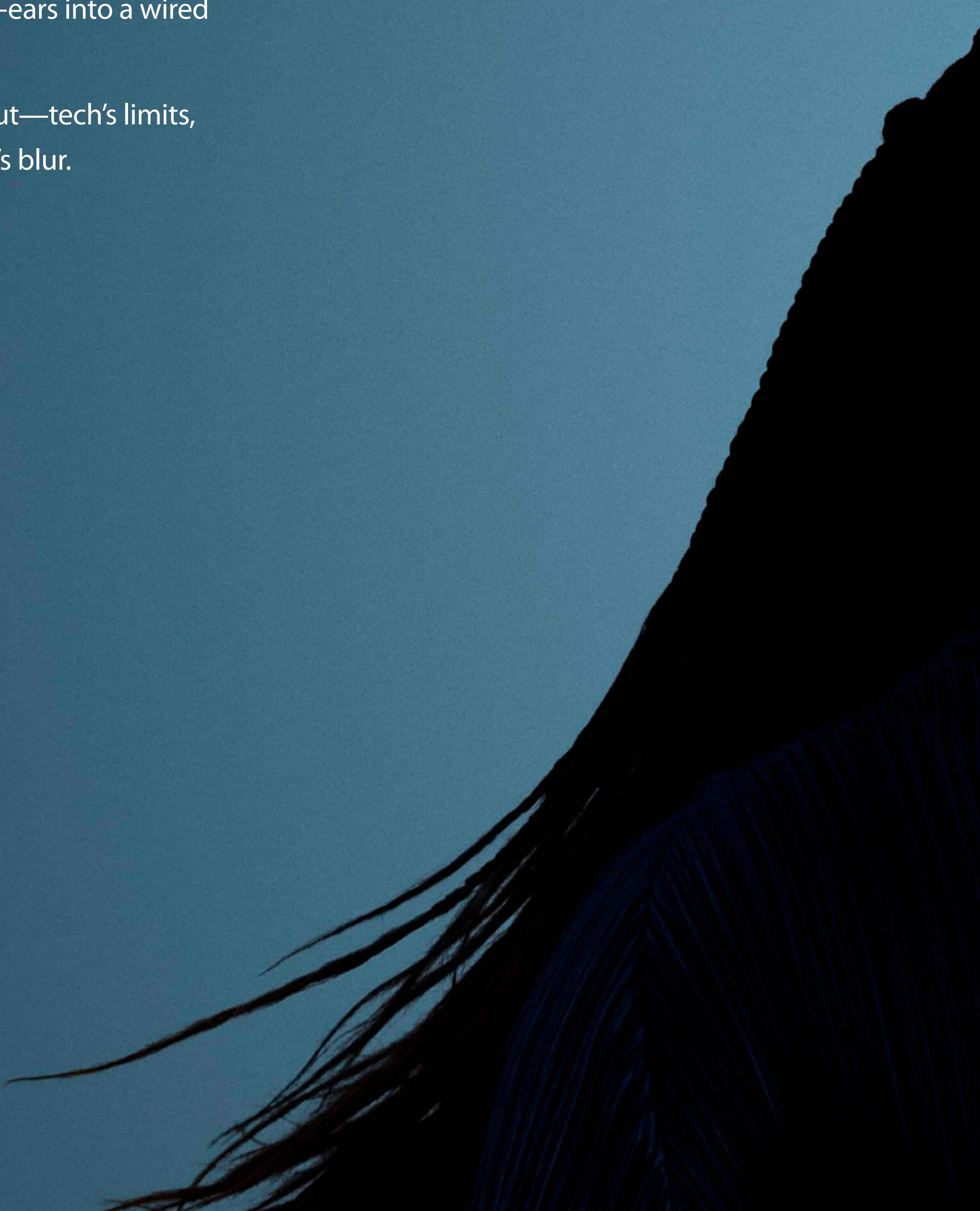
GEAR THAT LISTENS BACK

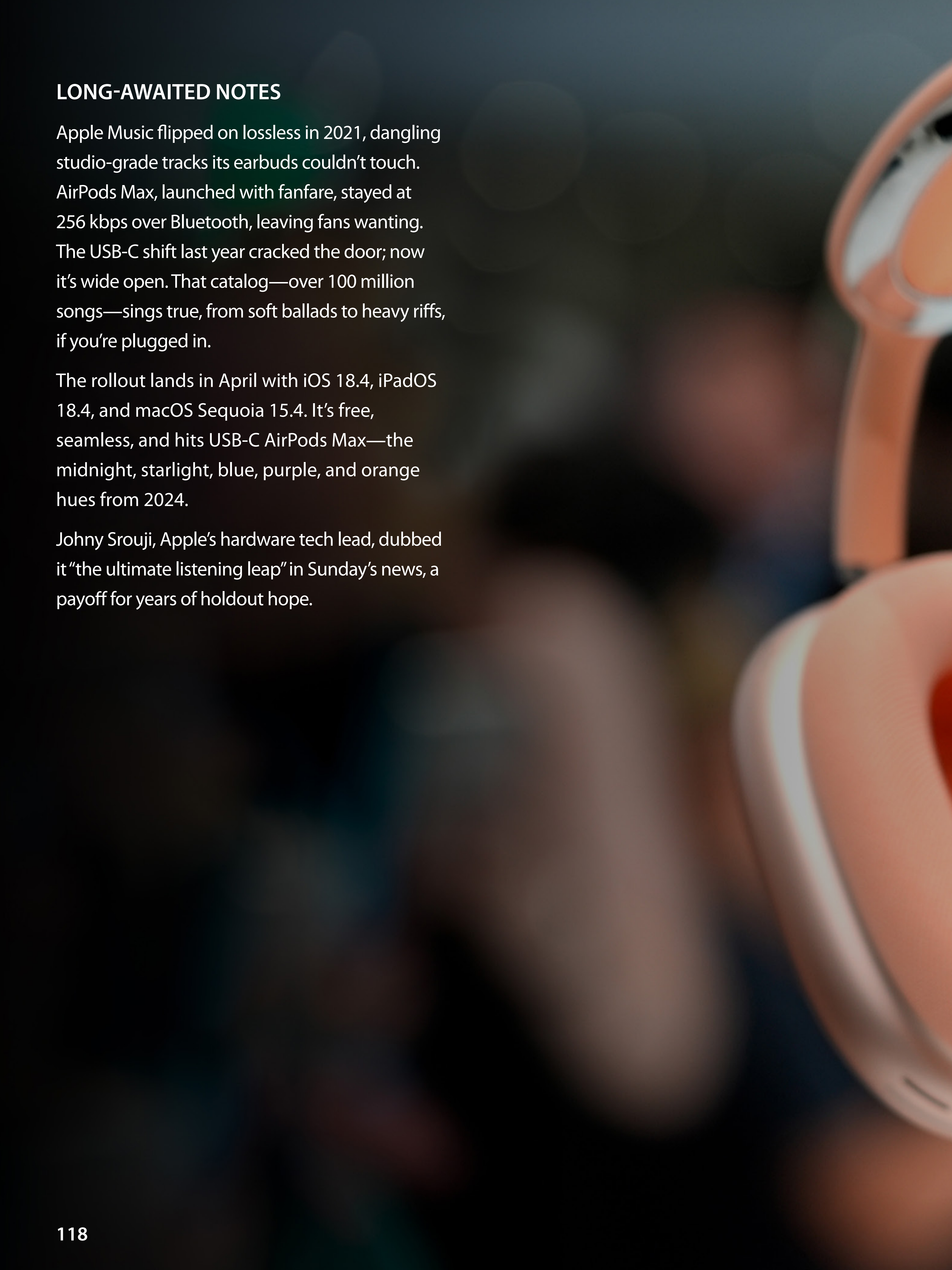
The update's a lifeline for creators. AirPods Max turn into studio-grade tools with that USB-C link—24-bit clarity meets head-tracking Spatial Audio, letting artists sculpt soundscapes that shift as you move. Gamers score too—lag drops so tight, every footstep or gunshot lands on cue.

Picture editing a podcast or dodging a sniper, the cans keeping pace with your every twist.

Apple's tossing in a new $39 USB-C to 3.5mm cable, on shelves now. It's a braided bridge for plugging into airplane seats, car decks, or any 3.5mm jack, turning those over-ears into a wired lifeline for pure playback.

Older Lightning models miss out—tech's limits, not a snub, cap them at analog's blur.



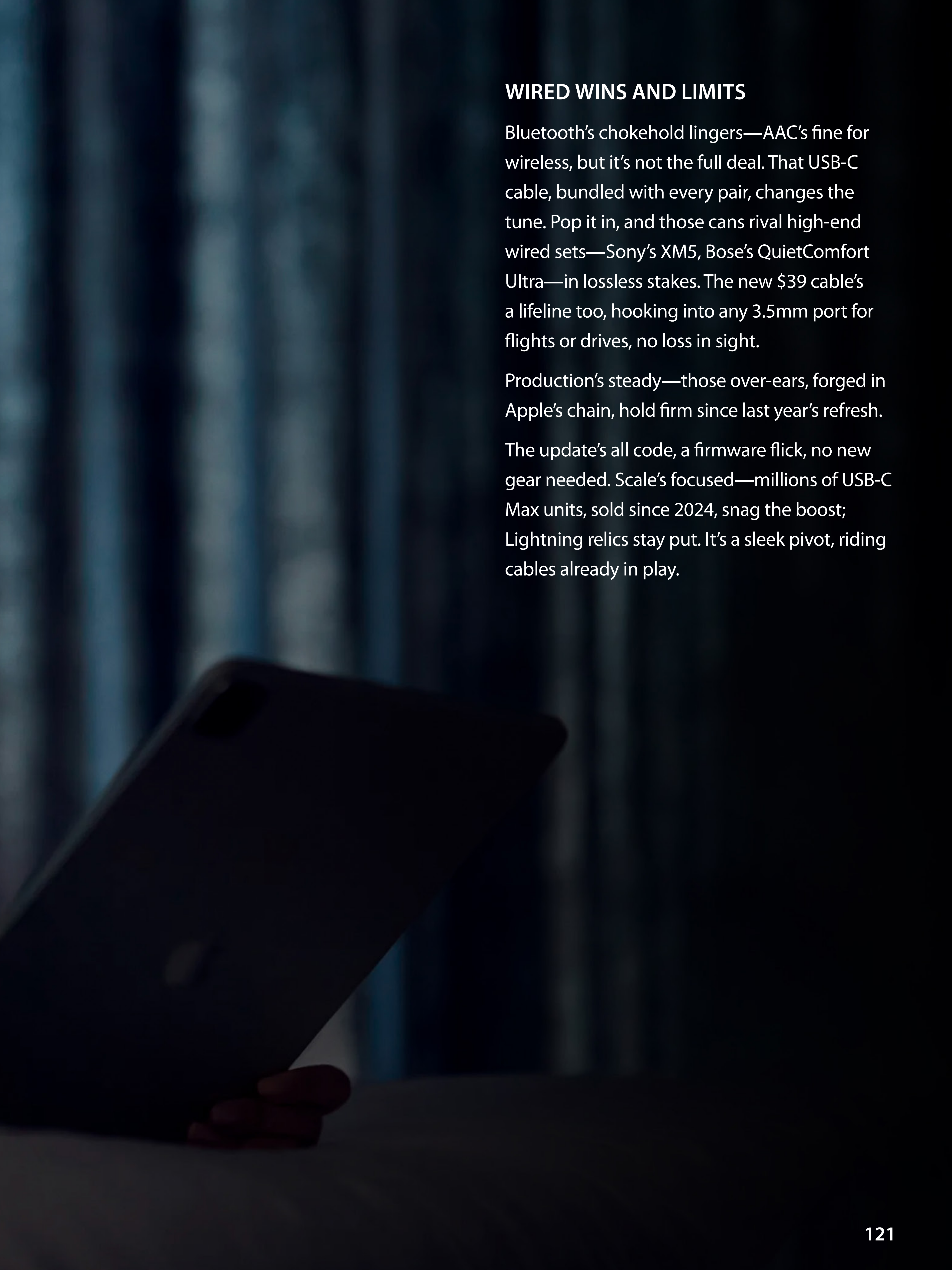


LONG-AWAITED NOTES

Apple Music flipped on lossless in 2021, dangling studio-grade tracks its earbuds couldn't touch. AirPods Max, launched with fanfare, stayed at 256 kbps over Bluetooth, leaving fans wanting. The USB-C shift last year cracked the door; now it's wide open. That catalog—over 100 million songs—sings true, from soft ballads to heavy riffs, if you're plugged in.

The rollout lands in April with iOS 18.4, iPadOS 18.4, and macOS Sequoia 15.4. It's free, seamless, and hits USB-C AirPods Max—the midnight, starlight, blue, purple, and orange hues from 2024.

Johny Srouji, Apple's hardware tech lead, dubbed it "the ultimate listening leap" in Sunday's news, a payoff for years of holdout hope.



WIRED WINS AND LIMITS

Bluetooth's chokehold lingers—AAC's fine for wireless, but it's not the full deal. That USB-C cable, bundled with every pair, changes the tune. Pop it in, and those cans rival high-end wired sets—Sony's XM5, Bose's QuietComfort Ultra—in lossless stakes. The new $39 cable's a lifeline too, hooking into any 3.5mm port for flights or drives, no loss in sight.

Production's steady—those over-ears, forged in Apple's chain, hold firm since last year's refresh.

The update's all code, a firmware flick, no new gear needed. Scale's focused—millions of USB-C Max units, sold since 2024, snag the boost; Lightning relics stay put. It's a sleek pivot, riding cables already in play.

SOUND THAT MOVES YOU

For music fans, it's a revelation—over 100 million tracks turn vivid, every layer bare. Creators wield a studio edge—mix with head-tracked precision, no lag to spoil the beat. Gamers dodge and weave, sound syncing tight to every move. It's a tale of tech bending to passion, wired but worth it.

The stakes are high—1.46 billion active Apple gadgets hum globally, and this tweak hits a slice of them. AirPods Max leap from Bluetooth champs to wired contenders, a shift years in the brew.

For users, it's a quiet thrill—plug in on a flight, stream pure from your phone, feel the sound unfold.

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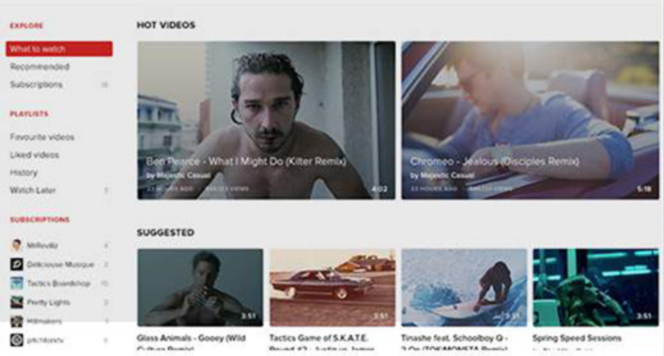

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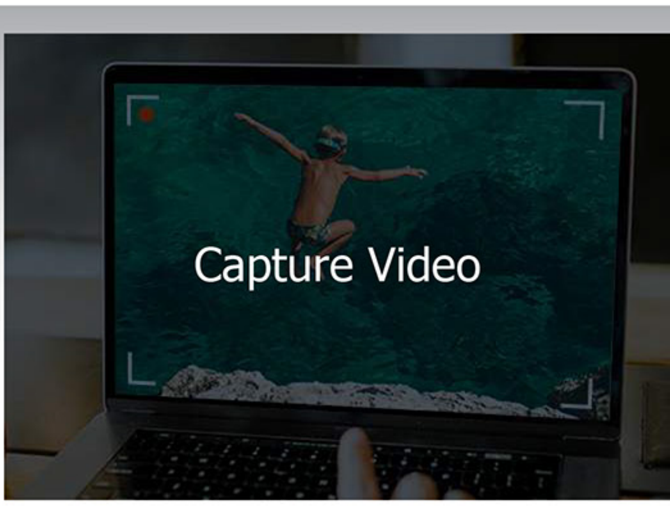

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FBI SOUNDS ALARM AS TESLA VANDALISM SWEEPS THE NATION

Picture a quiet Houston evening, the hum of traffic fading as a Tesla owner strolls back to their sleek electric auto, only to freeze at the sight of shattered glass and slashed tires glinting under a streetlight. The FBI fired off a public warning, spotlighting a wave of vandalism crashing across the U.S., targeting Tesla vehicles, dealerships, and charging stations in at least nine states. For drivers and tech fans, it's a jarring twist—those futuristic rides, once symbols of green innovation, are now caught in a storm of spray paint, gunfire, and flames.

T

Image: Arnaud Paillard

The trouble's been brewing since January, with lone wolves striking under cover of night, their motives scrawled in graffiti decrying racism, fascism, or political foes. Autos parked in lots from Texas to Massachusetts have taken hits—some torched with Molotov cocktails, others riddled with bullets or tagged with swastikas.

Dealerships haven't dodged the chaos, windows smashed and walls defaced, while chargers stand as charred relics of quieter days. The FBI's call urges folks to keep eyes peeled near Tesla turf, a plea echoing from coast to coast as the tally of trashed property climbs.

This isn't a tale of random mischief. The spark ignites with Elon Musk, Tesla's trailblazing chief, whose leap into Donald Trump's administration as head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) has sliced through federal jobs like a hot knife.

Since January, his push to shrink bureaucracy has riled up a hornets' nest—peaceful protests chant "Musk must go," but darker threads weave through.

A Houston woman caught her Tesla's cameras rolling as a figure in black keyed her ride in broad daylight, one of dozens snared on Sentry Mode clips nationwide.

NIGHTTIME SHADOWS AND BROKEN GLASS

The FBI paints a grim picture—attacks flare in darkness, often by solo actors wielding crude tools like firebombs or spray cans. In Loveland, Colorado, a Tesla lot faced five hits between January and February, Molotov cocktails scorching pavement while "Nazi" smeared across

windows in red paint. Out in Tigard, Oregon, gunfire peppered a dealership twice in early March, bullets pinging off autos and glass. Las Vegas saw a Tesla Collision Center blaze on March 18, five vehicles gutted and "RESIST" scrawled on doors, per local police logs.

Kansas City, Missouri, joined the list that same week—two Cybertrucks torched at a dealership, flames licking steel under a midnight sky. North Charleston, South Carolina, caught a suspect mid-act on March 7, homemade incendiaries igniting a charger alongside graffiti blasting Trump.

Seattle's Tesla lot burned too, four autos charred, swastikas and curses slashed across them. Dedham, Massachusetts, saw three Cybertrucks tagged with spray paint and tires punctured on March 11. It's a scattered spree, lone hands striking fast and fading into the night.

A POLITICAL FUSE LIGHTS UP

Musk's DOGE gig, launched post-Trump's January 20 inauguration, has slashed federal payrolls, sparking fury among those who see it as a billionaire's power grab. Tesla's autos, once green darlings, now wear his shadow—protesters and vandals alike pin them as symbols of his sway. The NCA in the UK flagged a parallel surge, with Telegram chats tied to 1,000 daily crime tips, but here, it's Musk's U.S. role stoking the fire. Posts on X howl against him, some cheering the chaos, others decrying it as madness.

The FBI's alert skips conspiracy talk—these aren't coordinated cells but solo outbursts, often laced with ideological venom. A 2023 sting nabbed 42,000 via encrypted apps,

RESIST
TESLA
NEVADA

Image: Steve Marcus

yet 80% slipped free, hinting at the scale. Here, it's simpler—anger finds a Tesla badge and strikes. Drivers feel the sting—one Houston owner told Click2Houston, "It's becoming a reality you can't ignore," their Sentry Mode clip now evidence in a swelling case file.

LAW STEPS IN WITH A HEAVY HAND

Attorney General Pam Bondi didn't mince words, branding the spree "domestic terrorism".

Three suspects face federal heat—Lucy Nelson in Colorado, nabbed with Molotovs near a Loveland dealership; Adam Lansky in Oregon, charged for firebombing a Salem lot; and a South Carolina figure caught torching chargers with anti-Trump screeds. Bondi's promise? Up to 20 years behind bars if convicted, a vow echoed by Trump's calls for stiff penalties, even floating El Salvador's jails as a destination.

The FBI's digging deep, partnering with local badges and the ATF to chase leads.

No grand network links these hits—lone wolves rule—but the feds urge vigilance. Spot a shadow lurking near a charger? Call it in, they say, with tips flooding 1-800-CALL-FBI. Bondi's probing funding too, sniffing for puppet masters, though evidence stays thin.

TESLA'S TECH FIGHTS BACK

Those autos aren't defenseless—Sentry Mode's cameras roll 24/7, snagging vandals mid-act. Houston's daylight keying, Seattle's swastika spree—clips pile up, feeding investigations. Tesla's not new to threats—its 99.95% uptime chargers hum across 2,000-plus U.S. sites—but this wave's personal. Owners fork over $225

BOUGHT USE
NO $ TO MUS

Image: Peter Morgan

ED-
SK

for GM-grade adapters elsewhere, yet here, it's survival tech at play.

The rollouts keep coming. Scale's vast—20,000 chargers, millions of autos—but vandals strike soft spots.

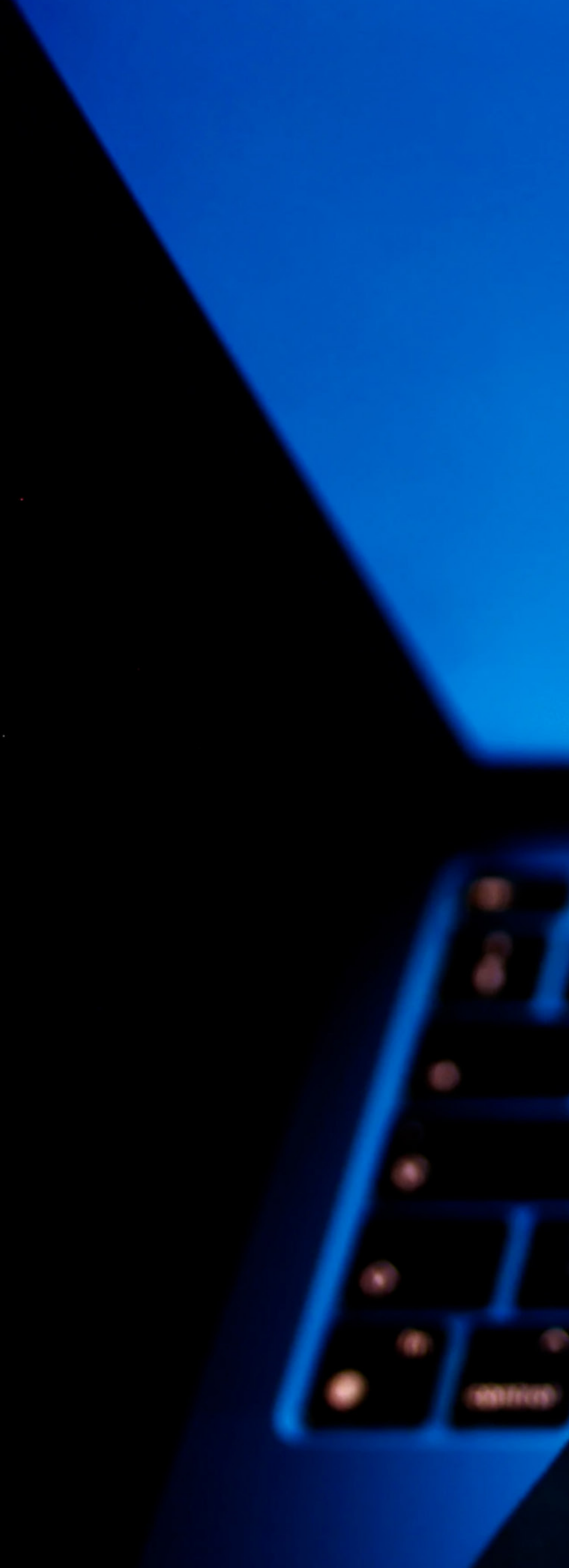
DRIVERS CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

For owners, it's a gut punch—park your ride, return to wreckage. One Dallas driver found their Cybertruck keyed at the airport, a Jewish owner in Seattle saw swastikas slashed across theirs. "I worked hard for this," they vented to local news, pride swapped for paint.

Protests chant outside dealerships—peaceful "Grandma Brigades" wave signs—but the spray cans and firebombs tell a grittier tale.

The stakes shift—sales dipped 16% in January, per Cox Automotive, as Musk's sway sours some buyers. Used Cybertrucks shed 8% value since Trump's term began, yet chargers hum on.

For users, it's a daily dice roll—plug in, tune out, hope the night stays calm.



Google Map

WAZE ON IOS AXES GOOGLE ASSISTANT AFTER YEAR OF UNFIXED ISSUES

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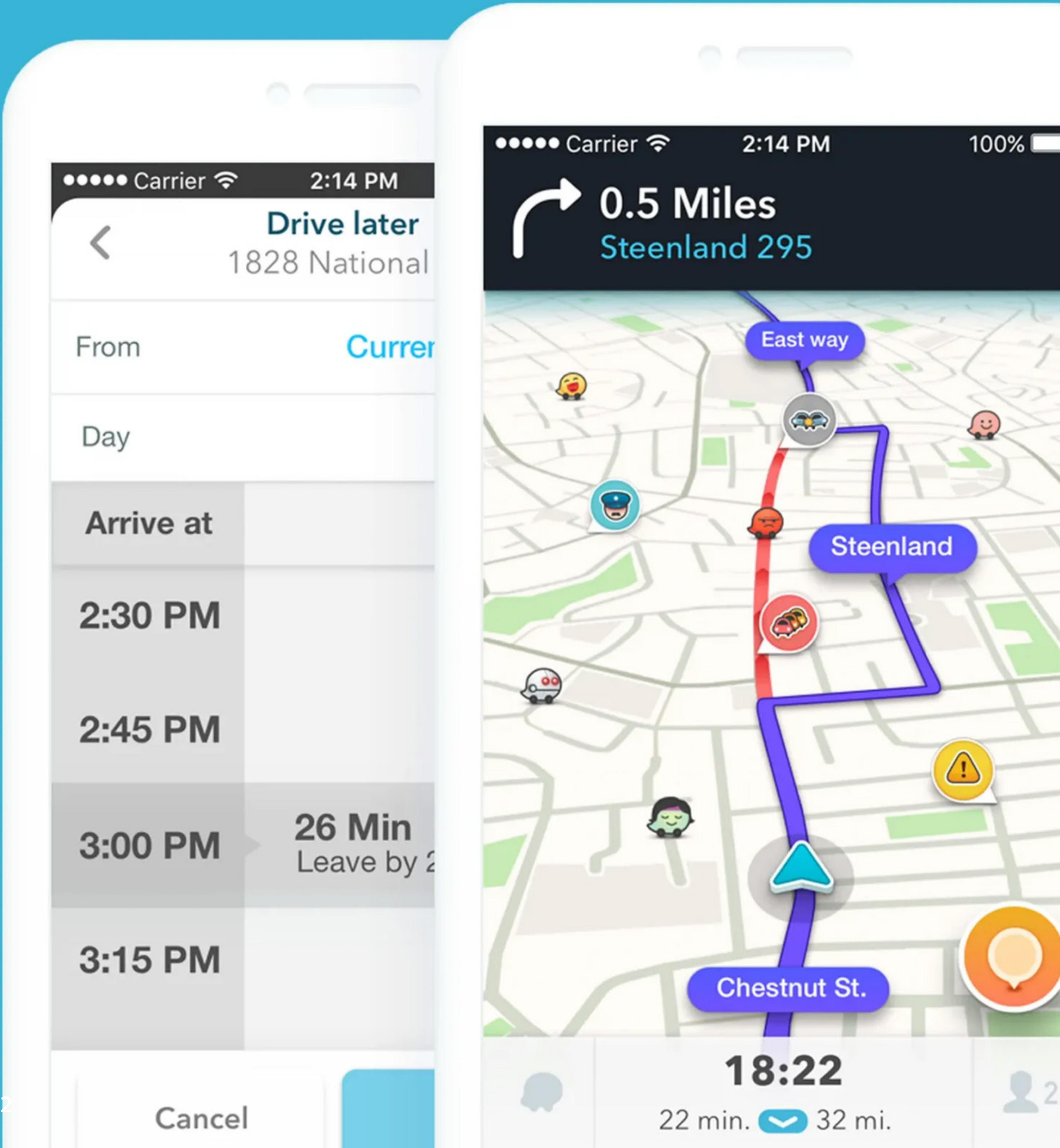
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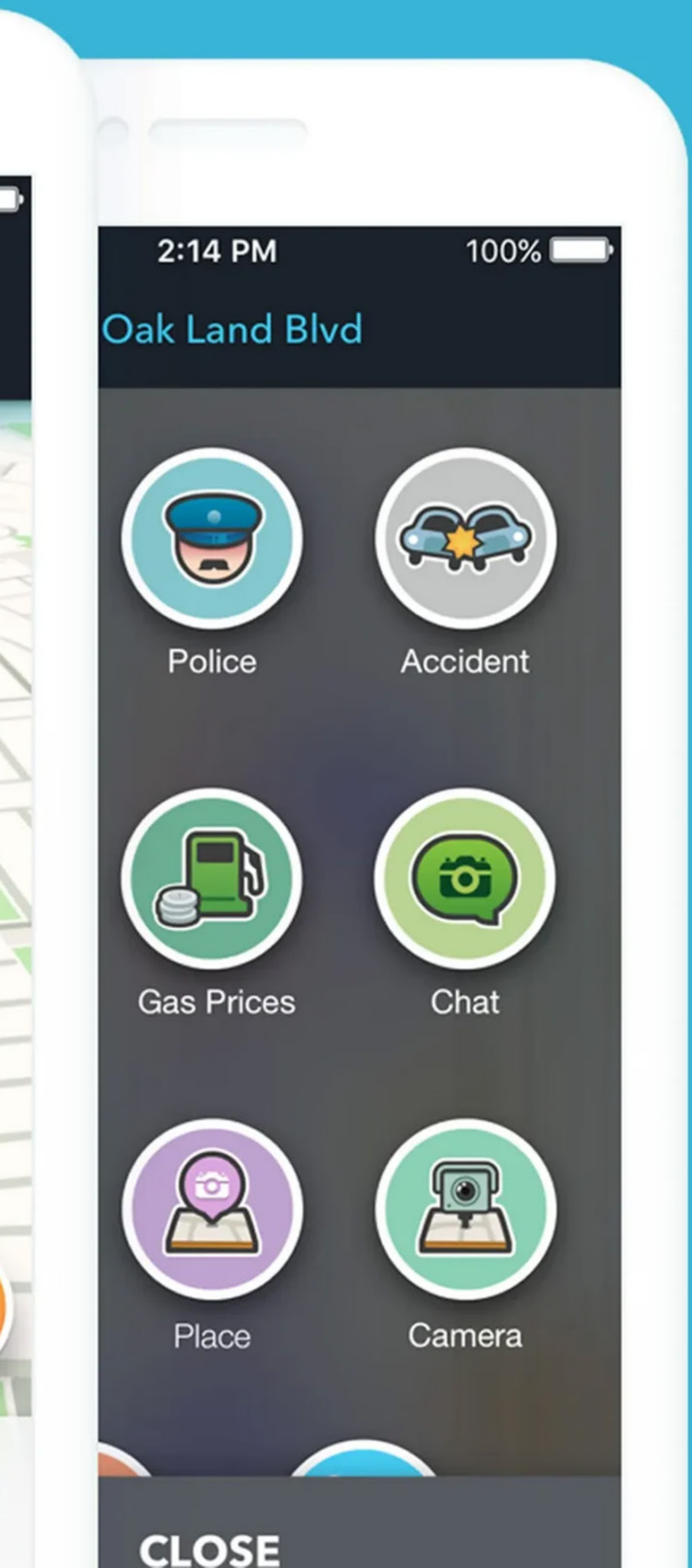


Software firm Google has pulled the plug on its Assistant integration within the Waze navigation app for iPhone users, ending a feature plagued by persistent glitches for over a year.

The Alphabet-owned navigation platform announced the move on its public forums, opting to ditch the tool rather than wrestle with ongoing technical snags that have frustrated drivers.

For iPhone users and navigation buffs, it's a shift that scraps a once-promising hands-free option, leaving Waze to chart a new course with a replacement voice solution still in the works.

This decision marks a clean break from a troubled chapter. Waze, acquired by Google in 2013, rolled out Assistant support on iOS in 2020 to let drivers issue voice commands for routes and traffic reports. Yet, the feature faltered, with users reporting silent responses or outright failures when tapping the microphone button, issues the firm couldn't resolve despite a year of effort.

A Waze representative acknowledged the prolonged hiccups on the forums, signaling a pivot to a fresh voice interaction system down the road.

Waze thrives as a crowd-sourced navigation app, relying on real-time driver reports to dodge jams and hazards, a strength that's kept it a favorite among commuters. The Assistant's exit on iOS doesn't touch Android users, where the tool runs smoothly, but it highlights a rare stumble for Google's ecosystem on Apple's platform. It's a practical cut—Waze is trimming a broken limb to refocus on what keeps drivers rolling.

VOICE COMMANDS HIT A WALL

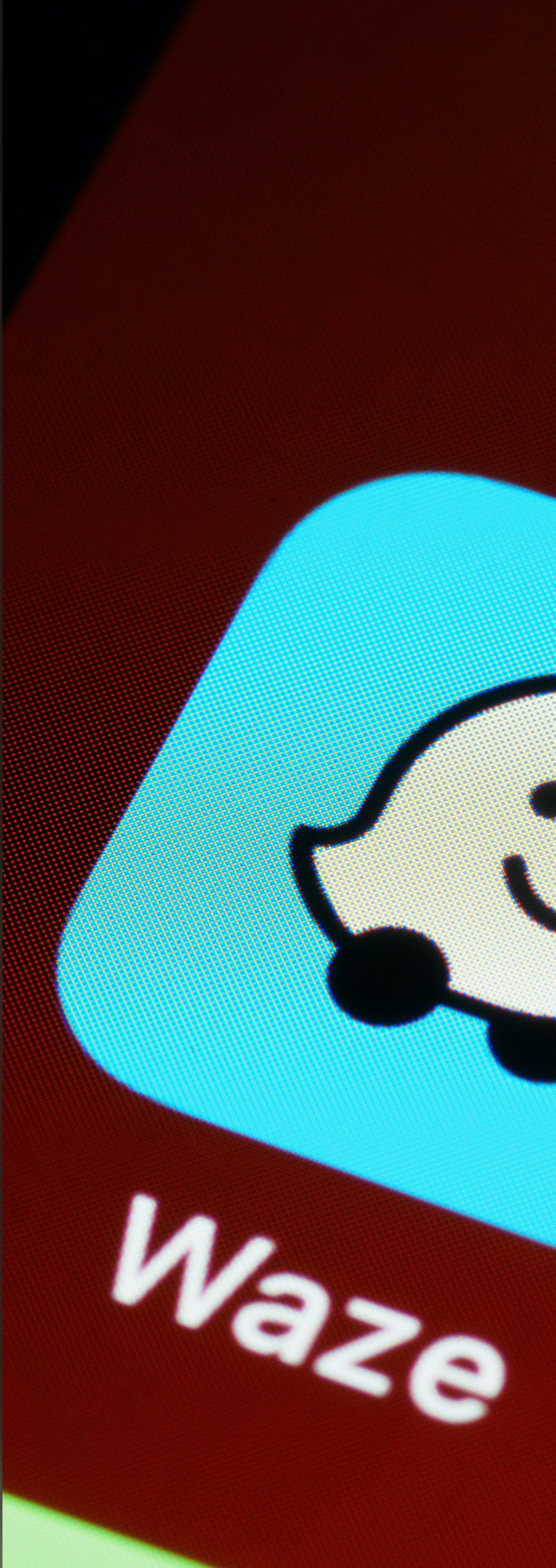
The Assistant's woes on iOS weren't subtle. Drivers found the microphone button unresponsive, even as it registered their voices, leaving commands like "find a gas station" hanging in silence. The integration, meant to streamline hands-free navigation, instead bogged down the app's flow, a stark contrast to its reliable Android counterpart. Waze's forum post offered no fix timeline, pointing instead to a new voice solution as the next step.

This isn't a full retreat—Android keeps Assistant intact, leveraging Google's tighter control over its own system. On iOS, the app's core reporting features, like flagging potholes or police, remain untouched, leaning on manual inputs or Siri where needed. It's a pragmatic chop, sidelining a glitchy add-on to preserve Waze's real-time edge.

Google's broader Assistant strategy adds context. The firm has been nudging users toward Gemini, its newer AI platform, a shift that's seen Assistant phased out elsewhere. Waze's iOS cut aligns with this pivot, hinting the replacement might tap Gemini's chops, though no specifics surfaced in the announcement. For now, iPhone drivers navigate without a voice crutch, a gap Waze aims to fill soon.

NAVIGATION STAYS THE COURSE

Waze stands apart from Google Maps with its driver-fed updates—crashes, traffic snarls, speed traps—making it a go-to for dodging delays. The app's 5 million iOS downloads lag Maps' ubiquity, but its loyal base prizes the live intel. Losing Assistant doesn't dent this backbone; users can still tap Siri or punch in reports manually, keeping the crowd-sourced engine humming.



Google

The app's iOS roots run deep—CarPlay support since 2018 has cemented its dashboard presence, syncing routes without Assistant's help.

Google's kept Waze lean, prioritizing rerouting smarts over flashy extras, a choice that's held firm amid this trim. It's a report of focus—Waze doubles down on what works, not what wobbles.

Infinite Reality's Napster buy grabbed headlines with virtual flair, but Waze's move here is grounded—fix the ride, not the frills. The firm's forum nod to a "near future" voice fix keeps hopes alive, though iPhone users roll on without it for now. It's a practical play, cutting losses to stay sharp.

TECH GIANTS ADJUST GEARS

Google's Assistant retreat on iOS mirrors a broader shuffle. Gemini's rise has seen Assistant phased from apps like Maps, a trend Waze now follows. The iPhone snag—unfixed for over a year—suggests platform quirks outpaced Google's tweaks, a rare misstep for a firm known for integration muscle. Android's smooth run shows the gap's not universal, just Apple-specific.

Waze isn't ditching voice entirely—a beta "Conversational Reporting" feature, tested since last fall, lets select users flag hazards with casual phrases like "crash ahead." It's a hint at what's next, a system that could lean on Gemini's natural language smarts. For now, iOS drivers wait, relying on taps or Siri to keep routes flowing.

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Google Photos

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23andMe

23ANDME BANKRUPTCY IGNITES PRIVACY WORRIES OVER MILLIONS IN DNA DATA

In a quiet South San Francisco office, a biotech outfit that once promised to unlock ancestry secrets through a spit tube has hit a financial wall, thrusting the genetic records of millions into an uncertain spotlight.

This week, 23andMe filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in a Missouri federal court, aiming to sell its assets—including a trove of DNA from 15 million customers—after years of cash struggles and a bruising data breach.

For those who mailed in their saliva, it's a sobering turn, as a firm once pegged at $6 billion now scrambles for a buyer amid a storm of privacy concerns.

This filing isn't a small blip. The firm's collapse follows a 2023 hack that exposed nearly 7 million users' records, a blow that dented trust and piled on lawsuits.

Now, with bankruptcy looming, 23andMe's privacy policy looms large—it states that customer DNA and personal details could shift to a new owner in a sale, a clause that's got state officials and security experts sounding alarms.

The stakes are high, with millions of genetic profiles potentially up for grabs in a market where such info could fetch a hefty price.

The tale begins in 2006, when 23andMe launched with a bold pitch—send in a saliva sample, get a peek at your roots and health risks. It boomed, selling over 12 million kits and building a database that ballooned to 15 million users.

But the shine faded—sales slumped, the one-and-done test model faltered, and a $30 million settlement from that 2023 breach added

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weight. CEO Anne Wojcicki stepped down from leadership this week, staying on the board as the firm hunts a lifeline through bankruptcy.

DNA ON THE AUCTION BLOCK

Bankruptcy isn't just paperwork—it's a reshuffle. Under Chapter 11, 23andMe aims to offload assets to keep afloat, and its crown jewel is that genetic vault. The firm's U.S. privacy statement lays it out—personal info, including DNA, may transfer in a sale, bound by the same terms under a new owner.

Wojcicki told staff the goal's a quick sale to a buyer who'll honor privacy laws, but that's cold comfort when the buyer's unknown.

The haul's massive—15 million profiles, each a map of ancestry, health risks, and raw genetic code. That's gold for drugmakers, insurers, or AI outfits, but a nightmare for users who didn't sign up for a data swap.

State officials aren't waiting—California's Attorney General Rob Bonta urged customers to yank their records fast, citing laws that let them demand deletion.

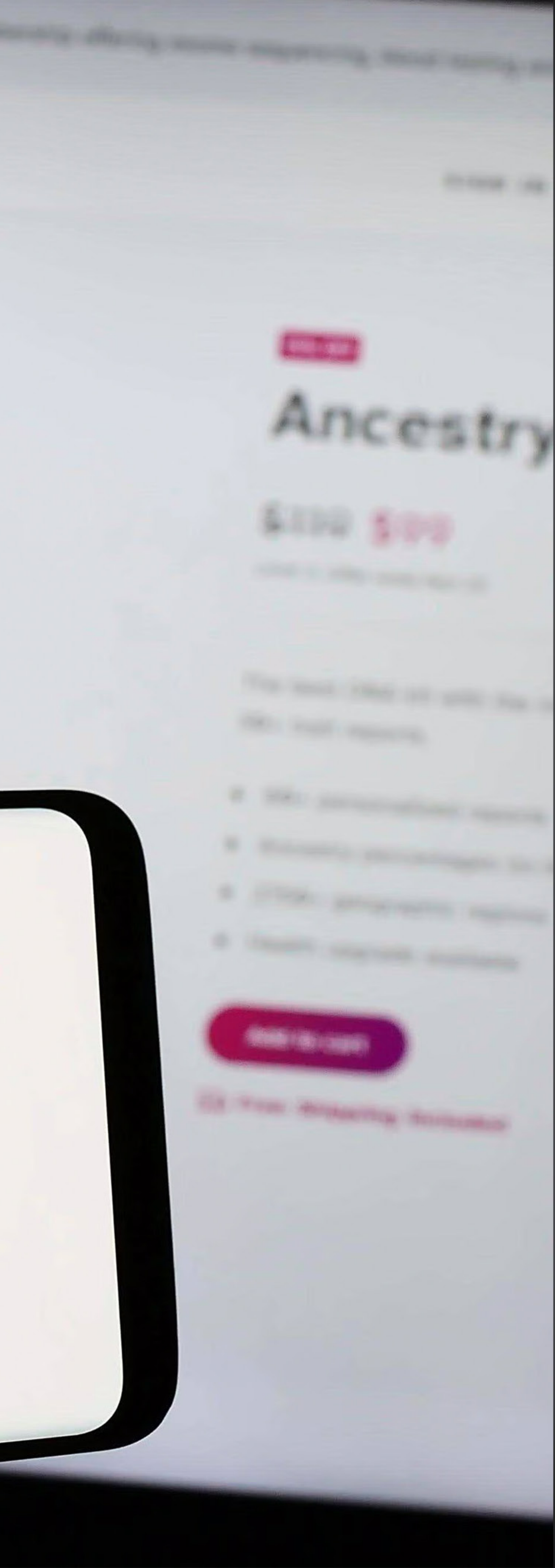
It's a scramble, with millions racing to pull their DNA before the gavel falls.

A BREACH THAT BROKE TRUST

The firm's woes didn't start with bankruptcy. In 2023, hackers raided 23andMe's systems for five months, snagging names, birthdates, ancestry reports, and DNA links for nearly 7 million users.

The fallout was brutal—lawsuits piled up, claiming lax security, and a $30 million settlement barely stanched the bleeding.

Ancestry Composition
23andMe



That breach left a mark, turning a once-trusted name into a cautionary headline.

Now, bankruptcy adds fuel to the fire. The firm insists it'll shield user records during the sale, but experts aren't so sure—Chapter 11 puts assets on the block, and DNA's fair game.

New York's Attorney General Letitia James echoed Bonta, pushing users to act, a rare double-barreled warning from state watchdogs. It's a story of trust frayed, with a firm's fall exposing cracks in digital armor.

THE MARKET FOR YOUR CODE

Why's this stash so hot? Genetic records aren't just family trees—they're blueprints for health risks, traits, and drug targets. Pharma firms could mine them for blockbuster cures; insurers might eye them for pricing tricks. The firm's sold anonymized slices before, netting millions, but a full sale could shift identifiable profiles—names, addresses, DNA—into new hands, legal under its terms.

Scale's the kicker—15 million users dwarf rivals like Ancestry, a database built over nearly two decades. Production's stalled—those spit kits stopped shipping profitably years ago—but the records live on, a digital hoard now up for grabs. It's a tale of value clashing with vulnerability, a biotech bet gone bust leaving millions exposed.

LAW STEPS INTO THE FRAY

State officials aren't sitting idle. California's Genetic Information Privacy Act and New York's consumer laws let users demand their records vanish—delete the account, ditch the sample.

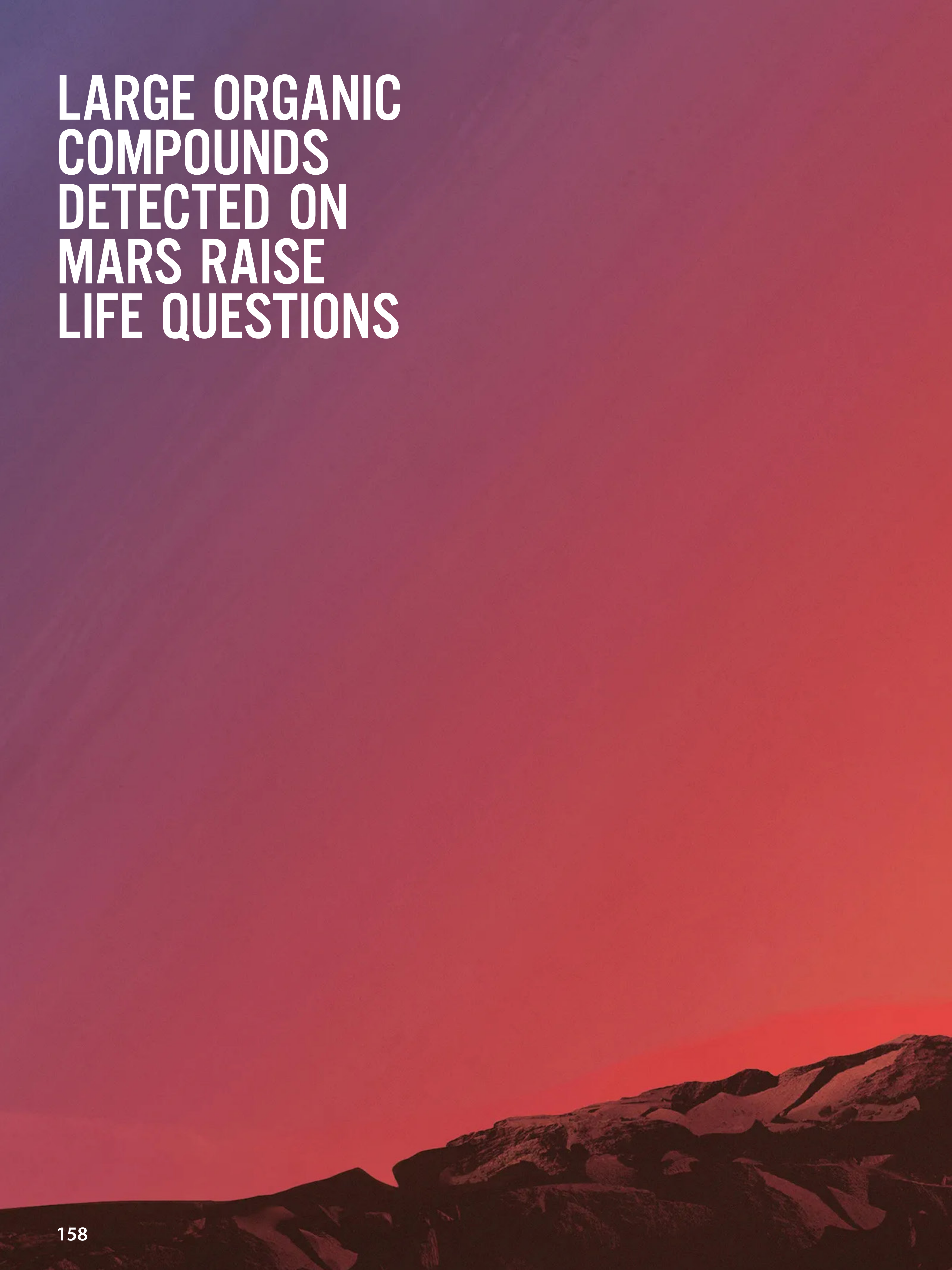
Bonta’s alert flagged a flood of requests crashing the firm’s site this week, a sign folks aren’t waiting to see who buys. James doubled down, offering steps to scrub profiles before a sale locks them in.

The firm’s not defenseless—it’s vowed to follow U.S. privacy rules, a thin shield when bankruptcy courts call shots.

Experts like Iowa law professor Anya Prince warn those rules don’t match medical-grade protections—DNA’s not HIPAA turf.

It’s a scramble, with users and lawmakers racing a ticking clock.

LARGE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS DETECTED ON MARS RAISE LIFE QUESTIONS

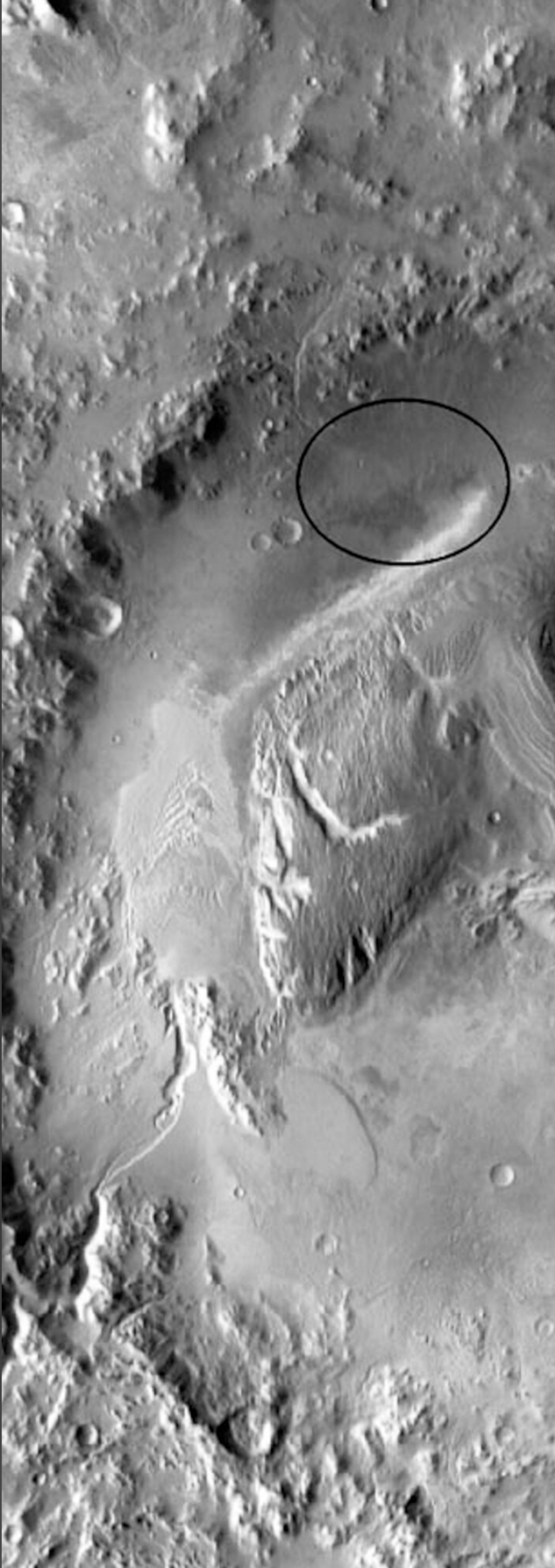


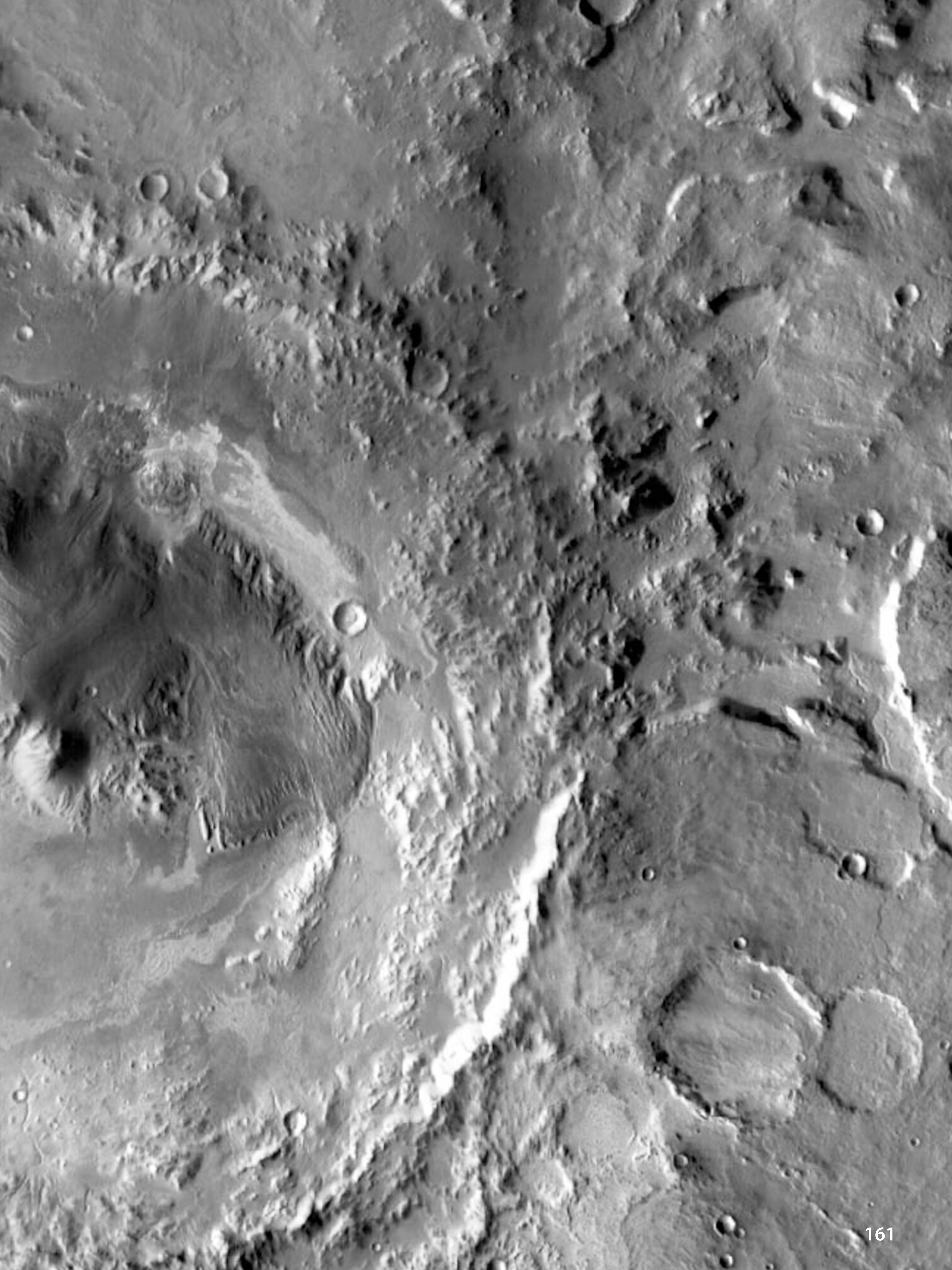
LARGE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS DETECTED ON MARS RAISE LIFE QUESTIONS

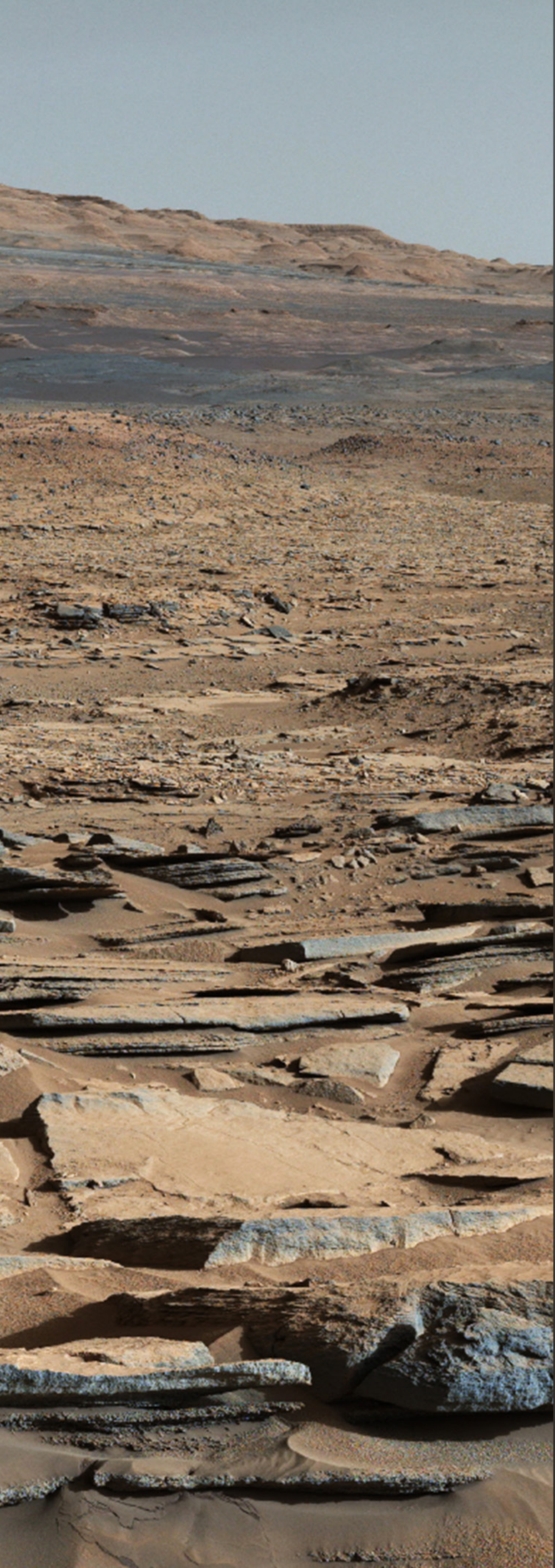
In the windswept expanse of Gale Crater, NASA's Curiosity rover drilled into a slab of Martian bedrock, uncovering the largest organic substances ever detected on the Red Planet. This haul from a 3.7-billion-year-old chunk named Cumberland marks a significant find, spotlighting complex carbon chains that could reshape science's view of Mars' ancient past. For researchers and space observers, it's a breakthrough stirring debate over whether the fourth planet once held conditions ripe for life.

The discovery carries weight. Inside clay-rich mudstone, Curiosity's Sample Analysis at Mars lab identified long-chain alkanes with 10, 11, and 12 carbon atoms each. These hefty structures surpass the six-carbon traces found earlier, offering a window into Mars' chemical history. Experts suggest they might stem from fatty acids, key to Earth's cell membranes, though the leap to biological origins remains unproven.

Gale Crater anchors the tale, a broad basin the rover has explored since 2012. Billions of years ago, water filled this space, leaving sediment that hardened into the bedrock Curiosity sampled on May 19, 2013, mission day Sol 279. That specimen waited over a decade until lab techs ran it through the rover's oven twice, revealing these carbon heavyweights in a shift from an amino acid search.







CARBON CHAINS UNDER SCRUTINY

These substances stand out. Decane, undecane, and dodecane extend beyond prior Martian finds, pointing to a chemistry more intricate than expected. Fatty acids form cell walls on Earth, and some see parallels here, though others argue they're likely geological byproducts from heat and pressure. Caroline Freissinet from France's CNRS labeled it a "notable detection" on Monday, signaling a past worth probing.

Cumberland's clay preserved these chains for 3.7 billion years, a timeline aligning with Earth's earliest life. Mars' cold, stable crust and arid climate locked them in, unlike Earth's shifting surface. Ancient water once shaped this site, depositing sediment that captured these traces, possibly from organic processes, possibly not. The question lingers, a puzzle science isn't rushing to solve.

AN UNEXPECTED TURN

The find emerged off-plan. Curiosity's team targeted amino acids, protein components, in that 2013 sample, but initial tests showed nothing. Years later, Freissinet's group reexamined the data, spotting three peaks overlooked in 2016. Lab work confirmed them as alkanes, matched by terrestrial tests. What began as a side effort turned into a headline, spotlighting these oversized chains.

Mars has yielded organics before, with methane and sulfur hints in Cumberland's clay suggesting complexity. This time, scale shifts the focus. Longer chains imply richer chemistry, a step toward life's toolkit, though no firm evidence points to biology. It's a tale of persistence, a decade from drill to discovery yielding a fresh angle.

GALE CRATER'S CLUES

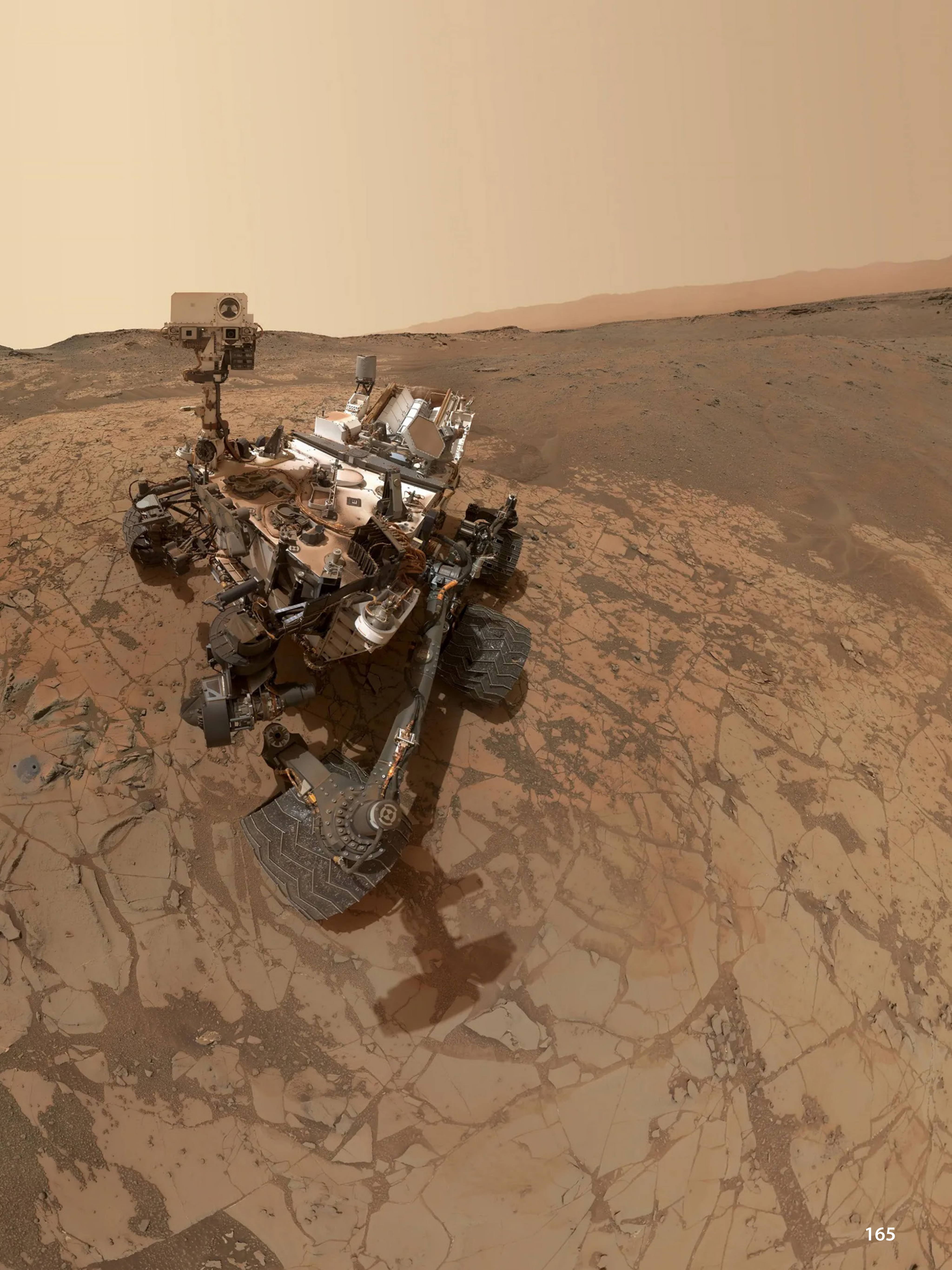
Gale Crater has long hinted at a livelier past. Curiosity's logged 20 miles across its expanse, mapping a lakebed from billions of years ago. Clay minerals and sulfur deposits mark water's presence, making it a key site for study. These alkanes add a layer, a piece in a mosaic of a once-wet world.

The rover's Mars Hand Lens Imager captured the Cumberland drill site, a 0.6-inch wide, 2.6-inch deep mark from that May day. That image, paired with gas chromatograph and mass spectrometer results, drives this story. It's a slow reveal, over ten years from dust to detection, but the wait paid off.

SCIENCE WEIGHS THE ODDS

Research teams are digging into this haul. Those extended chains could trace back to fatty acids, suggesting life's framework if Mars once supported it, or they might be mere geological leftovers. Freissinet's squad stays measured, no biological confirmation, but the rover's knack for spotting such traces stands firm. It's a report of tech pushing boundaries, teasing out secrets from bedrock older than Earth's oldest fossils.

This sets the stage for Perseverance, scouring Jezero Crater for samples slated for Earth return. If Mars harbored life, these substances signal the tools can catch it. For now, it's an open-ended query, a carbon hint from a silent planet.



NAPSTER SOLD FOR $207 MILLION TWO DECADES AFTER COLLAPSE

napster
napster

Software firm Infinite Reality has acquired Napster for $207 million, marking a revival for the music streaming service over two decades after its original collapse under legal pressure.

The San Francisco-based buyer, a specialist in immersive technology, took ownership from blockchain entities Algorand and Hivemind, who held the platform since 2022.

The deal positions Napster, with its catalog of 110 million licensed tracks spanning 34 countries, as a springboard for a new era blending audio streams with virtual experiences.

napster
™
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Infinite Reality's purchase taps into Napster's storied past, a brand that redefined music access in 1999 by enabling 80 million users to share tracks freely until lawsuits from record labels and artists like Metallica forced its bankruptcy in 2002.

Rhapsody relaunched it as a legal streaming outfit in 2011, and despite trailing giants like Spotify with just 5 million subscribers, it retains a foothold worth the $207 million price tag.

CEO Jon Vlassopulos described the move as a step to "reimagine music's digital landscape," signaling ambitions beyond traditional playback.

The acquisition reflects Infinite Reality's strategy to leverage its 3D expertise, honed through prior ventures like the Drone Racing League, to reshape how fans engage with tunes.

Plans include virtual concert venues and tools for artists to connect directly with listeners, a shift aimed at boosting Napster's modest user base.

Analysts view it as a calculated play to revive a faded icon while carving a niche in a crowded streaming market.

VIRTUAL SPACES RESHAPE STREAMING

Infinite Reality aims to transform Napster into more than a playlist hub. The firm's blueprint features 3D venues where listeners attend live performances, interact with artists, and purchase digital or physical merchandise.

These spaces offer analytics to track fan preferences, a leap from the passive streaming model that dominates today. The approach targets a slice of the global streaming audience, currently led by Spotify's 600 million users.

apster

The technology builds on Infinite Reality's immersive know-how, promising venues unbound by physical limits. Artists can host exclusive events or release tracks in custom environments, enhancing engagement over standard audio feeds.

It's an early-stage effort, with rollout details still forming, but it positions Napster to stand apart from rivals.

LEGACY MEETS NEW AMBITIONS

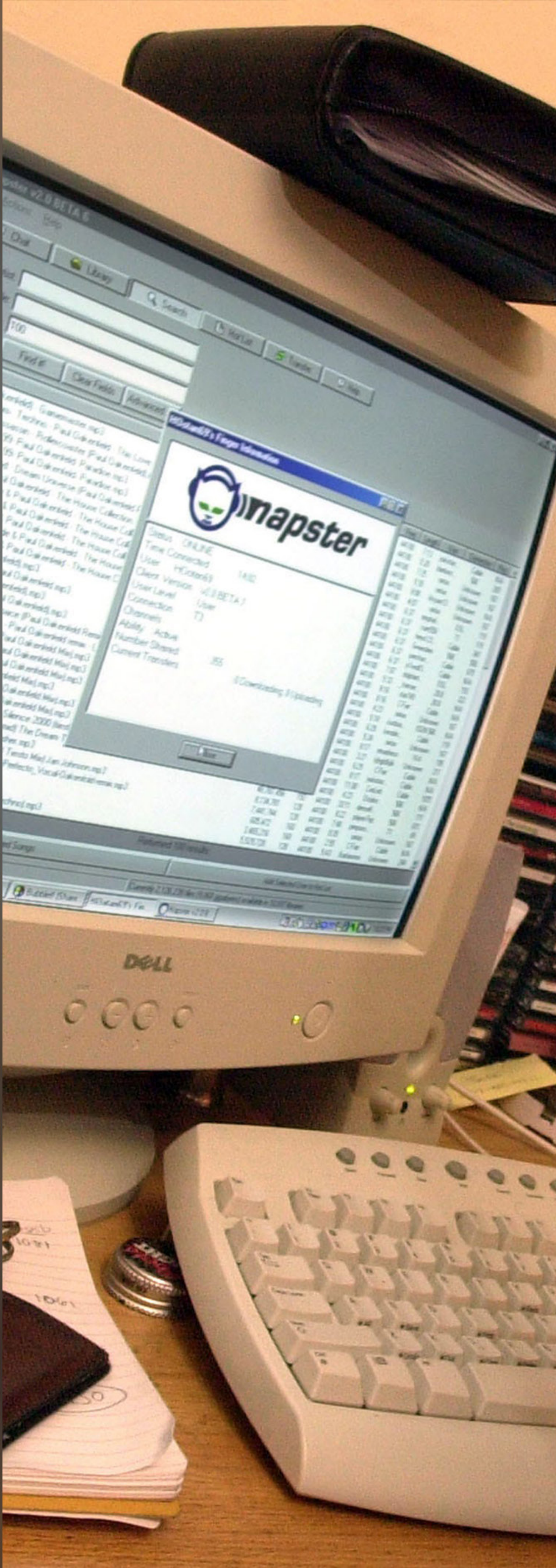
Napster's journey started as a file-sharing disruptor, peaking with 80 million users before legal battles crashed it into bankruptcy. Best Buy picked up the remnants for $121 million in 2008, and Rhapsody's legal relaunch paved a quieter path, amassing $1 billion in royalty payouts since.

The $207 million sale to Infinite Reality exceeds its 2020 MelodyVR deal of $70 million, banking on a brand that retains cachet despite years of flux.

The service's 5 million subscribers lag industry leaders, yet its 110 million tracks across 34 markets provide a solid base.

Infinite Reality's funds aim to amplify that reach, shifting from blockchain's niche focus to a broader virtual platform.

The deal underscores a legacy that's weathered storms, now poised for a digital encore.



HEATHER GRAHAM
BIG BEAT
Sprite
BRUT
Clearasil
DELL

Gam

GAMESTOP SHUTTERS STORES IN DROVES TO POUR CASH INTO BITCOIN

Across a quiet strip mall in suburban Chicago, a familiar logo flickers out as metal shutters clang down on yet another GameStop outlet, part of a sweeping retreat that's reshaping the video game retailer's footprint.

The firm unveiled plans to close a hefty batch of locations worldwide while funneling funds into bitcoin, a digital currency play that's turning heads in retail and tech circles alike.

For gamers, investors, and industry watchers, it's a bold pivot—a chain once synonymous with physical discs now betting on virtual coins to rewrite its future.

This isn't a subtle shift. GameStop's regulatory filing lays it bare—the company expects to shutter a "significant number" of outlets in the coming months, hot on the heels of closing 1,000 spots over the past year, trimming its global tally from a peak of 6,000 a decade ago to 3,203 today.

Alongside that pullback, the firm's board has greenlit a plunge into bitcoin as a treasury reserve asset, tapping a portion of its $4.8 billion cash pile and future financial moves to stack the cryptocurrency.

It's a tale of a retailer shedding brick-and-mortar skin to chase a digital lifeline.

The story traces back to GameStop's heyday, a go-to haunt for console fans snagging the latest titles off shelves. But the world's changed—digital downloads, streaming, and e-commerce have sapped the need for physical hubs, leaving the chain scrambling.

CEO Ryan Cohen, a Chewy co-founder who took the helm in 2021, has slashed costs, doubling

chew

fourth-quarter net income to $131.3 million last year.

Now, with bitcoin in the mix, he's steering GameStop into uncharted waters, a shift that's sparked debate and a 16% stock jump in premarket trading.

OUTLETS FADE, CRYPTO RISES

GameStop's retreat isn't new—590 U.S. outlets closed last year alone, with 330 more shuttered across Europe and nearly 50 in Canada and Australia.

The latest filing doesn't pin down which spots will go dark next, but the scale's clear—hundreds more are on the chopping block. It's a lean-down born of necessity, as gamers ditch discs for cloud libraries, a trend that's left the firm's retail core gasping.

Enter bitcoin. The board's unanimous nod to stack the cryptocurrency marks a sharp turn, using funds from cash reserves or future debt and equity plays to build a digital stash.

No cap's set on how much bitcoin GameStop might hoard, but with $4.8 billion on hand as of February 1, the potential's hefty.

Neil Saunders from GlobalData Retail dubbed it a "defense against irrelevance," a blunt take on a firm pivoting from retail roots to a crypto gamble.

A RETAILER'S RECKONING

The pivot's roots run deep. GameStop's glory days—think packed aisles for midnight launches—faded as digital storefronts like Steam and PlayStation Store took over.

The 2021 meme stock frenzy, fueled by Reddit traders, spiked its shares but didn't fix the core—sales kept sliding, profits shrank. Cohen's cost-cutting doubled earnings last quarter, yet the retail game stayed bleak, with e-commerce giants snagging what's left.

Bitcoin's the wild card. GameStop's not the first to eye it—MicroStrategy's billions in crypto bets turned it into a market darling—but it's a leap for a retailer.

Saunders argues it's less about gaming and more about riding a volatile wave, a view echoed by skeptics who see it as a Hail Mary. The stock's premarket pop shows investors are biting, but the jury's out on whether this swaps one sinking ship for another.

BITCOIN'S BIG BET

Why bitcoin? It's digital gold to some—$88,000 per coin after a wild ride past $100,000—and a hedge against inflation for firms with cash to burn. GameStop's $4.8 billion stash offers wiggle room, and Trump's crypto-friendly White House tilt could ease regulatory heat, a shift from the SEC's past skepticism. The firm's filing admits the risk—bitcoin's swings could dent the balance sheet—but it's banking on upside.

The tech's lean—GameStop's not mining coins or building wallets, just buying and holding.

Scale's the kicker—590 U.S. closures last year shrank its footprint to 2,325 outlets, freeing funds for this play. It's a story of a retailer ditching shelves for a blockchain bet, a pivot that's as much survival as strategy.

SOFTWARE GIANT SAP RISES AS EUROPE'S TOP FIRM AMID GERMAN MARKET SURGE

In a bustling tech hub nestled in Walldorf, Germany, a software titan has climbed to a new peak, its ascent fueled by a roaring German stock market and a knack for weaving artificial intelligence into the fabric of business operations.

This week, SAP claimed the crown as Europe's most valuable firm, its market worth soaring to $342.4 billion, edging out Denmark's Novo Nordisk.

For tech watchers and investors, it's a tale of a steady giant outpacing rivals, riding a wave of innovation and economic tailwinds to a perch atop the continent's financial landscape.

This milestone marks a shift. SAP's climb reflects a 40% stock surge over the past year, a rally sparked by its pivot to cloud services and AI tools that promise to streamline everything from payroll to supply chains. Novo Nordisk, the Danish drugmaker behind Ozempic's weight-loss boom, slipped to second place, its $332 billion valuation bruised by stumbles in its next-gen drug pipeline. SAP's ascent isn't just a numbers game—it's a story of a firm harnessing tech's next frontier while Germany's markets flex newfound muscle.

The roots stretch back to SAP's Walldorf base, where five ex-IBM engineers kicked things off in 1972, crafting software to tame the chaos of corporate data.

Fast-forward to now, and that vision's hit a high note—cloud earnings jumped 25% last year, fueled by a backlog of 63.3 billion euros ($68.5 billion) in contracts.

Christian Klein, the firm's head, has touted this as SAP's finest stretch, a claim backed by a flood of

novo nordisk

businesses ditching old servers for its AI-driven cloud setups.

CLOUD AND AI LIFT THE LID

SAP's not coasting on fumes.

The firm's cloud push has turned heads, offering tools that let sales teams, HR desks, and procurement squads tap automation with ease.

It's sitting on a goldmine of business data—HR stats, finance logs, supply chain flows—from 40,000 clients, a trove Klein calls unmatched in tech circles. That data feeds AI services, streamlining tasks across industries, a move that's kept investors buzzing.

The stock's climb mirrors a broader German market swell. The DAX index, a barometer of the nation's blue-chip firms, has soared nearly 16% this year, outrunning peers like Britain's FTSE 100 and France's CAC 40. A hefty fiscal package greenlit by lawmakers has poured fuel on the fire, funneling billions into infrastructure, green projects, and defense. SAP's shares, up 1.16% in a single day this week, ride that wave, cementing its lead.

NOVO'S SLIP OPENS THE DOOR

Across the North Sea, Novo Nordisk's crown has slipped. The Danish outfit, once Europe's darling thanks to Ozempic and Wegovy, hit turbulence as its next big drug, CagriSema, faltered in trials, souring investor hopes. Shares have shed 18% this year, a stark drop from last summer's highs when weight-loss buzz had them soaring. SAP seized the gap, its steady gains outpacing Novo's stumble.

The shift's not just about SAP's rise—Novo's woes reflect a tougher pharma game. Rivals are crowding the weight-loss turf, and skepticism over its pipeline has clipped its wings.

Meanwhile, SAP's cloud and AI bets keep humming, a contrast to Novo's rocky stretch. It's a tale of one firm hitting stride while another trips on its own hype.

GERMANY'S MARKET MOMENT

Germany's markets are flexing like never before. That DAX rally, outpacing Europe's slower climbers, owes much to SAP's heft—the firm's stock accounts for a hefty slice of the index's gains. Lawmakers' fiscal splash has stoked sentiment, promising bridges, wind farms, and tanks to keep the economy chugging. Analysts at Bank of America flagged SAP as a top pick, betting its AI upsell and cloud migration still have room to run.

SAP's not alone in the glow. Siemens and Deutsche Telekom join the party, but SAP's $342.4 billion valuation towers over them, a testament to its cloud-driven haul.

The firm booked 2.9 billion euros ($3.14 billion) in U.S. sales last quarter, nearly a third of its take, shielding it from Europe's economic wobbles. It's a story of a German tech anchor holding firm while others sway.

TECH THAT PAYS OFF

The magic's in the tech. SAP's cloud tools don't just store data—they wield it, letting firms automate grunt work across departments. Dominik Asam, the firm's finance chief, hailed a Chinese AI tool's market splash as a boon, a nod

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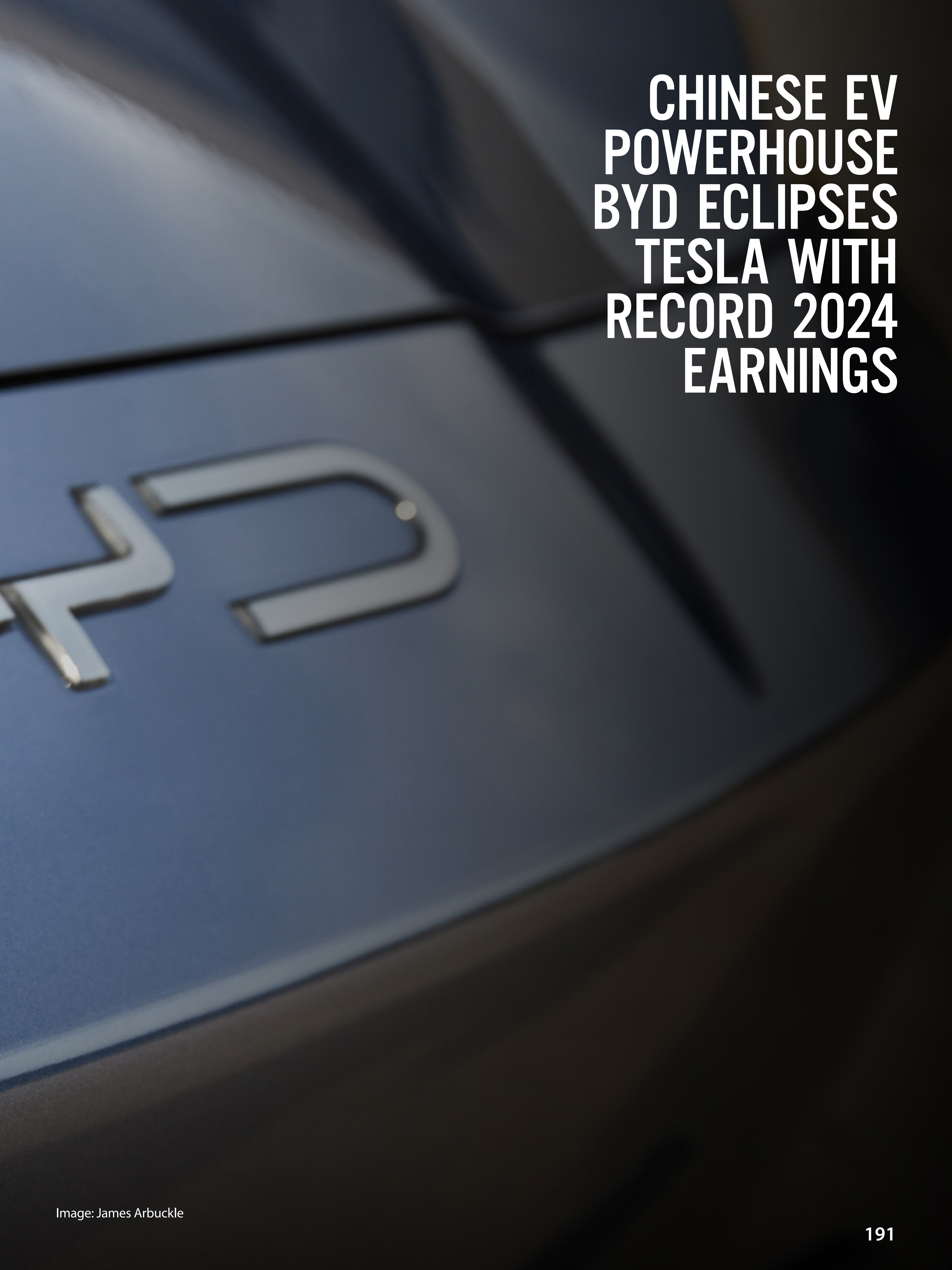
to SAP's knack for riding tech waves without picking sides in the AI race. That agnostic stance keeps it nimble, serving up solutions from sales forecasting to supply chain tweaks.

Production's steady—SAP's Walldorf hub churns out software, not steel, but its reach is vast. Over 40,000 clients lean on its systems, a scale that's turned last year's restructure into a profit engine.

Operating earnings are set to climb faster than sales, a 12% boost projected this year, the firm's briskest pace in a decade. It's a tale of tech paying dividends, not promises.

For businesses, it's a quiet win—SAP's tools streamline ops, cutting costs and chaos. Novo's slip leaves room at the top, and SAP's not shy about filling it. LVMH, the French luxury titan, trails at $322 billion, hit by softer demand for high-end goods. Europe's market map is shifting, tech's rising while pharma and luxury wobble.



CHINESE EV POWERHOUSE BYD ECLIPSES TESLA WITH RECORD 2024 EARNINGS

Image: James Arbuckle

Imagine a bustling Shenzhen street, electric autos humming past, their sleek lines catching the sun as a factory churns out the future on four wheels. BYD, China's electric vehicle titan, dropped a financial bombshell, revealing a record-breaking 777.1 billion yuan ($107.2 billion) in earnings for 2024, outpacing Tesla's $97.7 billion haul, according to a Shenzhen stock exchange filing.

For drivers, tech enthusiasts, and market watchers, it's a tale of a scrappy underdog turned global juggernaut, elbowing past its American rival with a mix of grit, innovation, and a knack for seizing the moment.

This isn't just a numbers game. BYD's haul marks a 29% leap from the year before, a surge fueled by a staggering 4.27 million vehicle sales—up over 40% from 2023—and a net profit of 40.3 billion yuan ($5.55 billion), climbing 34%.

Tesla, the electric pioneer, hit a wall with its first annual sales dip in a decade, delivering 1.79 million autos while grappling with profit squeezes and a polarizing CEO. BYD's ascent isn't quiet—it's a roar, echoing from China's bustling lots to Europe's cobblestone streets.

The story starts in Shenzhen, where BYD's factories hum day and night, churning out everything from zippy compacts to hybrids that blend battery and gas.

BYD
BYD DOLPHIN

Last year, the company didn't just sell autos; it sold a vision—affordable, electric, and everywhere. February alone saw 318,000 units roll out, a 161% jump from 2023, while Tesla's numbers sagged. It's a tale of momentum meeting opportunity, with BYD riding China's trade-in deals and a hunger for green wheels to a record finish.

SHENZHEN'S SPEED DEMON

BYD's climb isn't luck—it's strategy. The company's 4.27 million sales split into 1.76 million pure electric autos and 2.49 million plug-in hybrids, a dual-track approach Tesla's pure-battery focus can't match.

That hybrid edge paid off—sales soared 72.83% over 2023, while pure electrics grew a solid 12.08%. In China, the world's biggest electric market, BYD's a kingpin, outselling local rivals with prices starting at $10,000 for the Seagull hatchback, a fraction of Tesla's $39,000 Model 3 base.

The fourth quarter sealed it—BYD raked in 274.9 billion yuan ($37.92 billion), up 52.7%, with a net profit of 15 billion yuan ($2.1 billion), up 73.1% from 2023's final stretch. Tesla's Q4 profits, announced in January, fell short, capping a year where growth stalled. BYD's not just winning at home—94,477 autos shipped overseas in Q3 alone, a 32.6% jump, hinting at a global hunger for its wheels.

BYD DESIGN

EUROPE’S NEW PLAYER

Across the sea, BYD’s planting flags. Hungary’s set to host its first European factory by year’s end, pumping out compacts with a new “Super e-Platform” battery that juices up in five minutes—1,000 kilowatts, enough for 470 kilometers (292 miles) of range. Tesla’s Superchargers top out at 500 kilowatts, a gap BYD’s betting on to woo European drivers.

Vice-President Stella Li told reporters last week, “Registration numbers will spike in March and April,” as showrooms pop up from Paris to Munich.

This push isn’t smooth sailing. EU officials are sniffing around, probing whether China’s subsidies gave BYD an unfair leg up—Li vows transparency, but tariffs could loom.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump’s fresh import taxes pile onto Biden’s smart-car tech ban, boxing BYD out of American lots. Still, Europe’s a prize—BYD’s compact electric model, unveiled this month, aims to rival VW and Renault, backed by a football sponsorship that lit up last summer’s championships.

A RIVAL’S STUMBLE

Tesla’s year reads like a different script. Sales dipped—1.79 million autos delivered, down from 2023’s pace—marking its first annual drop in a decade. Profit margins shrank, Q4 earnings lagged, and Elon Musk’s Trump ties stirred buyer unease in Europe, where far-right nods cost showroom traffic. BYD’s 777.1 billion yuan haul outstripped Tesla’s $97.7 billion, a gap widened by China’s cash-for-clunkers boost and Tesla’s aging lineup leaning hard on Model Y and 3.

The Cybertruck, Tesla's big bet, rolled out late 2023 but floundered—pricey and quirky, it couldn't lift sales. BYD's flood of models, from the $10,000 Seagull to the luxe Han sedan, kept buyers buzzing. It's a tale of agility trumping inertia—BYD danced while Tesla stumbled.

TECH THAT DRIVES THE WIN

BYD's edge isn't just volume—it's innovation. That Super e-Platform battery, unveiled mid-March, charges autos as fast as a gas pump fills a tank. Five minutes nets 292 miles, a leap Tesla's chargers can't touch. Hong Kong-listed shares hit a record high this month on the news, a signal investors see gold in BYD's tech.

The company's churned out 4.27 million vehicles, blending pure electrics and hybrids, a versatility Tesla's pure-play misses.

Production's a juggernaut—factories in Shenzhen, Xi'an, and soon Hungary hum with scale. Over 90% of sales stay in China, but exports doubled to 450,000 units, chasing a 500,000 goal.

Tesla's 20,000 U.S. chargers dwarf BYD's reach, yet China's 36,499 NACS ports keep the home game strong. It's a story of tech meeting hustle—BYD's not waiting around.

BYD
BYD KING
DM-i
BYD KING

BYD SEAL U

RIDERS ON THE STORM

For drivers, it's a mixed bag—BYD's autos zip from Beijing to Berlin, cheap and green, but U.S. tariffs and EU probes cast shadows. Owners snag range and speed—470 kilometers in five minutes trumps Tesla's 500 kW pace—yet trade wars could hike prices. China's streets teem with Seagulls and Hans, a flood Tesla's pricier Models can't match.

The stakes ripple—BYD's $107.2 billion haul signals a shift, a giant born from Shenzhen's bustle now out-earning Tesla's California shine. Europe's next—Hungary's plant fires up soon, a foothold in a market Tesla's losing grip on.

It's a tale of grit, tech, and timing—BYD's riding high, and the road's wide open.

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SPECIAL EDITION" Spirits were high at Apple's "There's more in the making" event, which was held at the Howard Gilman Opera House in Brooklyn, New York on October 30. Hot off the heels of the launch of the new iPhone XS, XS Max and XR, Tim Cook and Co were ready to show off next-generation models of two of the company's most beloved products: the Mac, and the iPad. Introducing a whole host of new editions, this was an Apple event to

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